

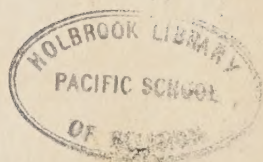


Rock Pond.

1825



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2022 with funding from
Kahle/Austin Foundation



S. P. and

THE CHRISTIAN MAGAZINE.

BY MEMBERS OF MENDON ASSOCIATION.

VOL. I.

JANUARY, 1824.

No. 1.

At a special Meeting of Mendon Association, in Wrentham, 21st November, 1823.

Several members of the Association having united for the purpose of commencing and supporting a religious publication, to be entitled "THE CHRISTIAN MAGAZINE;" and having submitted their design to the Association, and requesting their approbation and influence in favor of it—

It was voted, That the Association cordially approve of the design, and promise their influence in favor of the proposed publication, and recommend it to the patronage of the churches and congregations in their connection, and to the community in general.

A TRUE COPY:

ALVAN COBB, *Scribe pro tem.*

CONTENTS.

ORIGINAL COMMUNICATIONS

The Everlasting Gospel,	Page
The Union of Christians in Heaven,	
Sermons—No 1. Divine Truth the Means } of Christian Growth, }	9
Sinners cannot be saved without Repentance,	15
The Religious Experience of Mrs. P——	24
	27

RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

View of the Missions under the Direction of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, }	30
---	----

PROVIDENCE, R. I.

PRINTED FOR THE PROPRIETORS BY BARNUM FIELD.

1824.



PROPOSALS

For Publishing a Monthly Periodical Work,

TO BE ENTITLED THE

CHRISTIAN MAGAZINE.

BY MEMBERS OF MENDON ASSOCIATION.

To every serious observer of the skepticism and conflicting opinions of the present age upon the subject of religion, the question, "What is truth?" must be peculiarly interesting and important. It is the design of the proposed publication, to furnish candid inquirers with a satisfactory answer to this question. The most important points, both of christian doctrine and practice, will, as occasion requires, be discussed in *THE CHRISTIAN MAGAZINE*. Although this work is designed to be principally original; yet a portion of its pages will be appropriated to extracts from the writings of distinguished authors. Literary and obituary notices, occasional reviews of new publications, with the most recent and important religious intelligence, will also find a place in the work. How far the conductors of the contemplated publication will succeed, in their important design, those who shall give themselves the trouble to peruse it will be able in future to determine.

CONDITIONS.

1. *THE CHRISTIAN MAGAZINE* shall contain 32 octavo pages, be executed as respects the type and paper in the style of *The Christian Spectator*, and afforded to subscribers at \$1.50 a volume, payable in advance; or \$2 paid at the end of six months.

2. Those who become responsible for five copies, shall receive the sixth gratis.

3. No subscriptions are to be taken for less than a year; and if notice of discontinuance is not given before the issuing of the last Number, subscribers will be considered as desiring it the succeeding year.

4. It shall be published in Providence, R. I. commencing with January.

N. B. All communications to this work are to be sent, *Post Paid*, to the Office of BARNUM FIELD, by whom it is to be printed.

Q7 Subscribers are requested to give directions to the Printer where they will have their numbers deposited.

THE CHRISTIAN MAGAZINE.

VOL. I.

JANUARY, 1824.

No. 1.

ORIGINAL COMMUNICATIONS.

THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL.

The gospel is the scheme of grace, which God has revealed in the holy scriptures for the salvation of sinners, through the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. The first notice of the gospel was given to the parents of the human family on their apostacy from their primitive holiness. It was more clearly revealed to Abraham, to Moses and the prophets, until the Lord Jesus Christ appeared on the earth. During his ministry he plainly preached and correctly explained the gospel of the grace of God. He said, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." To the saints at Corinth the apostle says, "Brethren, I declare unto you the gospel, which I preached unto you, which also ye have received and in which ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you, first of all, that which I also received,

how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures." It is, then, evident, that the gospel is the great scheme of salvation through the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is this gospel, which is called the everlasting gospel in the fourteenth chapter of the Revelation. There John says, "I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having *the everlasting gospel* to preach unto them that dwell on the earth and to every nation and kindred and tongue and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come; and worship him, that made heaven and earth and the sea and the fountains of waters."

That the gospel of salvation through the death of the Lord Jesus Christ is, with propriety, called the everlasting gospel, may appear from the following observations.

1. This gospel was devised from eternity. The scheme of redemption arose from the good pleasure of God. He was not bound, in justice, to do any thing for the sal-

vation of sinners. It was wholly from his infinite benevolence, that he formed the purpose of, their salvation. But when did he form this purpose? This question has been variously answered by such persons, as have attempted to explain the gospel. Many have supposed, that the plan of salvation was not an original design of God, but was adopted upon the apostacy of mankind. They imagine, that God intended, when he formed our first parents, that they and their posterity should always be perfectly holy and happy. And they suppose, that after God saw sin had entered the world, he formed the scheme of salvation, that he might overrule the existence of evil to his own glory and the good of his intelligent creatures. But this supposition is highly derogatory to the infinite wisdom of the creator and governor of the universe. For it implies a great defect, either in his natural or moral attributes, to form a scheme, which needed such an important and essential alteration and amendment. It is, therefore, more rational to suppose that the scheme of redemption was his original and eternal purpose. And if we examine the scriptures we shall find the most explicit and positive declarations, that God formed the plan of the gospel before the existence of any other being. To the saints at Ephesus the apostle writes—"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spir-

itual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world." And again in the same epistle, "Unto me is this grace given, that I should preach among the gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ; to the intent that now unto principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose, which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." Here the scheme of redemption is declared to be the eternal purpose of God and his ultimate design in the work of creation. It appears, therefore, from the divine character and declarations, that the gospel, in its origin, is from eternity. The plan was formed and fixed eternal ages before the work of creation was begun. It is the first and supreme design of God, which includes all his other designs and all the means of their accomplishment. The scheme of redemption is so far from being only an appendage to the scheme of creation, that the design of creation is wholly subservient to the supreme and ultimate design of redemption.

2. The gospel is everlasting in its nature. The scheme of salvation through the death of the Lord Jesus Christ was not only formed

in eternity, but it was formed upon immutable principles and upon an eternal foundation. It resulted from the united perfections of the Deity. His whole mind was employed in forming this great design. He clearly perceived whatever was possible, and in view of what infinite wisdom, infinite goodness and almighty power could do, he saw the plan of the gospel to be the best scheme, that he could devise and effect. When God formed this plan he had a perfect knowledge of all things, that ever can be known by his rational creatures, or even by himself. It is not, therefore, possible that any imperfection should ever be discovered, or any amendment ever be devised, in respect to the purpose of redemption. For this reason the gospel must be immutable and everlasting in its nature. If the design of God in the gospel were defective or imperfect, it might be revised and amended and consequently might not be eternal. But since it was formed in the council of infinite knowledge, wisdom and goodness, it is the best of all schemes, that were possible and is established upon an immutable foundation. It cannot be amended in a single iota by the united wisdom of all rational creatures, that ever can exist; nor by the manifold wisdom of the only wise God. This perfect and glorious scheme can never be, in the least degree, varied through the ages of eternity. God, therefore, will forever work all things

after the counsel of his own will according to the everlasting gospel of his grace. Hence the psalmist says, "The counsel of the Lord standeth forever;—the thoughts of his heart to all generations." And God says by Isaiah, "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." As the gospel is founded upon the immutable perfections of God, it is, in its nature, as eternal as his existence, and as immutable as his perfections. It is, therefore, everlasting in its nature as well as in its origin.

3. The gospel is everlasting in its effects. It forever interested and gratified the affections of Jehovah. It was the great subject of his contemplation and felicity. He clearly perceived its great and happy effects, which, in prospect, afforded him perfect and infinite satisfaction. But it could not have any influence except upon his own mind, until he began to create other beings. The work of creation was the first effect of the purpose of redemption through Jesus Christ. As it is written, "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him: and he is before all things and by him all things consist." From these words it is evident, that all things were created in reference to the purpose of redemption, which the Lord

Jesus Christ engaged to perform. As this purpose began to operate in the creation of all things, so it has continued to operate in their preservation and government. It has operated upon the material system and also upon the lower species of living creatures. The whole creation groaneth under the evils and pains, which are connected with the purpose of God in the salvation of sinners.—These effects are temporary.—The world will be burnt and the brutes will cease to exist. The scheme of the gospel has also operated upon rational creatures, and its effects upon such creatures will be eternal.

It involved the rebellion of the apostate angels in heaven and established the elect angels in everlasting holiness and happiness.—The scheme of the gospel has occasioned the universal rebellion of mankind. For the purpose of God in the redemption of sinners could not have been effected, unless Adam had fallen from his original rectitude and his posterity had become sinners. The state of the world from the fall of Adam unto this day has been affected by the influence of the gospel upon the character and condition of human beings. The gospel brought the Lord Jesus Christ into the world, nailed him to the cross, raised him from the grave to heaven and placed him as head over all things unto the church. The gospel opened the way for the effusions of the Holy Spirit. And ac-

cording to the gospel God forms vessels of mercy and vessels of wrath and fits every human being for his future and eternal condition. Nor will there ever be in the universe a rational creature, whose character will not be formed by the influence of the gospel. And the characters of rational creatures, as they will be formed through the influence of the gospel, will continue forever; and their condition will agree with their character and be equally permanent. They, who are in their moral character formed into the image of God, will enjoy his favor forever; but they who are not formed into his moral image, will fall under his everlasting displeasure. It is one of the plainest doctrines of the gospel, that the happiness of the righteous will continue forever and that the misery of the wicked will never end. In his description of the final judgment the supreme Judge has said, "Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, Come ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal." According to the Savior's representation of the final judgment, the gospel operated from the foundation of the world and by its influence formed the

character of the righteous and the character of the wicked and produced the glorious and awful effects of everlasting life and everlasting death. But after the decisions of the final judgment the influence & effects of the gospel will continue through the endless ages of eternity. As long as God shall preserve and govern the moral world he will work all things according to his eternal purpose, which he purposed in Christ Jesus. The scheme of the gospel always has been and always will be the measure of the divine conduct. Though this scheme will be brought to a consummation at the judgment of the great day; yet it will not then be so finished, that there will be no occasion for God to govern his intelligent creatures, wherever they may be placed; whether in a state of perfect blessedness or of endless perdition. And his government of his rational creatures in eternity will continue and extend the influence and effects of his great purpose of redemption. The gospel, therefore, will be literally and absolutely everlasting in its effects; which will be seen and felt, with increasing attention and sensibility, by every rational being forever and ever. The origin, the nature and the effects of the great purpose of redemption, through the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, illustrate and establish the sentiment, that the gospel is, with the highest propriety, called the everlasting gospel. This sentiment, which has been illustrated

and established by the preceding observations, suggests a number of remarks, which deserve a candid and serious attention.

1. If the gospel be the eternal system of divine conduct, then, according to the gospel, God is, in all things, his own supreme object. God could not devise, establish and accomplish the purpose of redemption through the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, without a supreme object, which should be worthy of himself. But could God, in the past ages of eternity, have found any object, that should be worthy of his supreme affection, except himself; when there was no other being in existence? Or, in the future ages of eternity, can God find any being, except himself, that shall be worthy of his supreme affection; when there can be no other being, to whom he shall not give existence? And when all other beings, that ever shall exist, are before the mind of God, can they, in his view, be more worthy of his supreme affection than himself? Though God should create worlds upon worlds without cessation and without limitation forever; yet he could not cause such a system of created existence, as should possess more knowledge, wisdom, power, goodness and happiness than do forever exist in himself. Whatever might be the multitude and magnitude of the creatures, that God could create, yet these created beings cannot be more worthy of their own supreme affection, or of his su-

preme affection than their creator. The creator must, in the nature of things, possess knowledge and wisdom, power and goodness, beauty and happiness incomparably superior to what he can communicate to created beings, whatever might be their multitude or their magnitude. No created being can be eternal, or self-existent, or omnipotent. No created being can be holy as God is holy, or just as God is just, or good as God is good, or gracious as God is gracious, or true as God is true. Though created beings may be like God in the nature of his rational powers and in the nature of his moral perfections; yet they cannot be like him in the duration and extent of his natural and moral perfections. God must forever be the only supreme, eternal, independent and self-existent being; and the only being, who can ever possess infinite perfection. He must, therefore, be unto himself and to all other beings the only worthy object of supreme attention, affection and enjoyment.— And before God, created beings must forever be as nothing. According to the plainest and strongest dictates of reason, God must be, because he ought to be, the only worthy object of his supreme affection in all his designs, and in all his conduct. If the gospel be a rational system, it must agree with the perfections of Jehovah. And if it agrees with his perfections, he must be his own supreme object in the eternal purpose of

redemption, which he purposed in Christ Jesus, and which he performs through the blood of the everlasting covenant, by the power and grace of the Holy Spirit.

2. If the gospel be the eternal system of divine conduct, then God has, according to the gospel, decreed all things. The scheme of the gospel includes the existence, the powers, the actions and state of the holy and unholy angels. It includes the existence, the properties, and operations of the material system. It includes the existence, the character, the conduct and state of the common parents of the human family, and of their innumerable descendants. The scheme of the gospel includes the mediation, the incarnation, the crucifixion and exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ; his appearance at the final judgment, his resignation of his mediatorial authority, the approbation and complacency of his Father and his God and his everlasting communion and blessedness with his redeemed people in Heaven. It also includes the office and agency of the Holy Spirit in the instruction and sanctification of the spiritual body of the Lord Jesus Christ. And it includes the great and happy effects, which the Holy Spirit produces, through his special influence, by all the means that have been used since the world began, or shall be used until the world shall end, in order to accomplish the purpose of redemption. The everlasting gos-

pel includes the desires and the designs, the exertions and enjoyments of the ever blessed God, in respect to himself and his creatures; in respect to heaven, earth and hell; and in respect to whatever exists in the universe from eternity to eternity. Now, to whom shall be ascribed the purpose of redemption with its eternal and infinite connections and consequences? Who has made all things? and who has made all things for himself? And has he no system of conduct? Is it scriptural, is it rational, is it possible, to believe that God according to the everlasting gospel, has a supreme regard to himself in all things? and yet, that he has not decreed all things? If a single fact can be known, and if a single truth can be learned by rational creatures, it is in fact true, that God has decreed all things. There is not a more rational, or a more scriptural sentiment in the whole system of natural and revealed religion, than the doctrine of divine decrees.—The everlasting gospel is the eternal purpose of God, according to the counsel of his own will, by which for his own glory he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.

3. If the gospel be the eternal system of divine conduct, then, according to the gospel, God causes all things by his supreme agency. The angel, whom John saw “fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them, that dwell on the earth, and

to every nation and kindred and tongue and people,” proclaimed with a loud voice the doctrines and duties, which compose the foundation of natural and revealed religion. This angel says, “Fear God and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come; and worship him, that made heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.” According to the everlasting gospel, fear, glory and worship are to be given to God by the nations and families of the earth. And they are to be given to him, on account of his supreme agency in the creation of all things. The whole system of the gospel exhibits the supreme agency of God, in the creation and government of all things, according to the eternal purpose of redemption through Jesus Christ.—It is absurd to suppose that God formed this purpose in the council of his own will, unless he were able and willing to accomplish it. But he cannot accomplish it, only by his own supreme agency. If we understand the origin, the nature and effects of the gospel, we shall be obliged to admit, that God is the supreme cause of all things. The supreme object of God in the purpose of redemption must influence the whole system of his conduct. From this object he cannot deviate in a single instance, unless he turn from himself and renounce his glory forever. His supreme object disposes and obliges God to cause whatever is best, and to prevent whatever is not best in its

eternal connections and consequences. God is the only being, who can know, and who can do what is best. And his knowledge and power enable and oblige him to do what is best, and to work all things after the counsel of his own will, which is perfect and infinite in wisdom and goodness. The gospel exhibits the supreme agency of God, throughout the universe, in the greatest brightness and beauty. If God be glorious, his gospel is glorious. And if his gospel is glorious, it is for the glory of his great name, that he should perfectly accomplish his eternal purpose, which he purposed in Christ Jesus. The glorious gospel of the ever blessed God, therefore, affords abundant and decisive evidence, that he creates and causes, by his supreme agency, whatever exists in the universe. If the everlasting gospel be a rational system, it must agree with the perfections of the everlasting God. And it is one of the plainest and strongest dictates of reason, that God is the creator, preserver, governor and proprietor of all things, and that he causes, by his holy and supreme agency, whatever comes into existence from eternity to eternity. This sentiment respecting the universal agency of God agrees with his natural and moral perfections, with his purposes and conduct, with his law and gospel, and with whatever exists in the universe. Nor is there, a single truth, that

is more fully and clearly taught in the scriptures, than the doctrine, that God is the supreme cause of all things. Moses says, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Job says of God, "He is in one mind and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth." The Psalmist says, "Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven and in earth, in the seas and all deep places." Solomon says, "The Lord hath made all things for himself; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil." By Isaiah God says, "I am the Lord and there is none else. I form the light and create darkness; I make peace and create evil; I, the Lord, do all these things." The Lord Jesus Christ said to his disciples, "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground, without your Father."—And the apostle says, by the Holy Spirit, God "worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." It is, then, as certain and as evident, that God causes all things, by his own supreme agency, as it is that God exists. The everlasting gospel, therefore, teaches us to believe, and warrants us to say, what the apostle says, in respect to God—"For, of him and through him and to him are all things: to whom be glory forever, Amen."

JUDAH.

THE UNION OF CHRISTIANS IN HEAVEN.

The redemption of his people is the great object of God in the creation and government of his creatures. To obtain a correct knowledge of this object, it is necessary to perceive the character and condition of his people before they are redeemed; and their condition and their character when their redemption shall be completed in heaven. On these subjects we have abundant instruction in the holy scriptures. The scriptures plainly exhibit the character, with which the people of God are born into the world; and their character after they are renewed, while they remain in this state of trial. And they plainly exhibit their character and condition, when they shall be collected and united in the kingdom of glory. That the people of God are to be so formed in this life, as to be perfectly united in their future and eternal existence, we are frequently and plainly taught in the scriptures. The union of christians in heaven engaged the attention and the affections of the Lord Jesus Christ in his noted prayer before he was betrayed into the hands of his enemies. That the same subject constantly employed the exertions of the apostles is evident from their instructions to christians and christian churches, which are recorded in their epistles. And it is evident from the whole system of divine truth, that all the members of the

true church of God will finally be collected and formed into one society. But they are now greatly dispersed; and in many respects very different. Some members of the church have finished their labors and trials on earth and entered upon that rest, which remains for the people of God in heaven. Other members have been renewed, but are yet imperfect and afflicted in this state of sin and sorrow. There are other persons, who were given to Christ in the covenant of redemption, that yet live in their native blindness, enmity and unbelief. In these respects they, who are to be the united members of the Redeemer's spiritual body, are very different. They are also very different in other respects. They greatly differ in their constitutional temperament and their temporal circumstances. They also differ in their natural talents and intellectual acquirements. Nor are they less different in their spiritual endowments. Some have been endowed with the spirit of prophecy and the power of miracles. Respecting their services and sufferings in the kingdom of God, some have been endowed with one talent, some with two talents and some with five talents. In their moral character, as they are born into the world, though they are alike, yet being wholly selfish and sinful, they have no union of sentiment, affection, interest and enjoyment. That vast number of rational beings, who are

to compose the church of God in heaven and to be perfectly united in one body, as they are to be found from the commencement of their existence, until they shall be collected in the kingdom of glory, are in the greatest variety of the most discordant circumstances.—They form a perfect chaos. No two members of the church, which is to be formed into a society of perfect order, beauty, love and joy, are alike in any respect, except it be, that they are hateful and hate one another; until they are renewed by the Holy Spirit. Of such materials the spiritual temple of the living God is to be formed with such order and unity, that he may walk in it and dwell in it without the least offence or disturbance forever. To become perfectly harmonious and beautiful, all the members of the church, which is the body of Christ, must be united, formed and bound together by the tenderest and strongest bonds. Respecting the union of christians in heaven the following remarks may be worthy of particular attention.

1. All the members of the church will, in heaven, be united in sentiment. In this life the people of God have such a knowledge of divine truth, as is peculiar to themselves and as agrees with the divine oracles. The Lord Jesus Christ said, “It is written in the prophets—and they shall all be taught of God. Every man, therefore, that hath heard and hath learned of the Father, com-

eth unto me.” To the saints at Corinth the apostle writes, “He, that is spiritual, judgeth all things.” And John says to christians, “ye have an unction from the Holy One and know all things.”—Though the people of God have, in this life, a peculiar knowledge of divine subjects and do know the truth, as it is in Jesus, yet they are not “perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” Respecting many subjects they are greatly ignorant and erroneous. But in heaven, though their knowledge will be limited forever, they will be free from darkness, error and delusion, respecting the subjects, on which they shall form and embrace any sentiment. The apostle says, “Now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.” The glory of God, without any veil, will shine upon his people in heaven. Their attention will be turned and fixed upon the same objects. And while they behold the same objects, in the pure and clear light of heaven, their views will exactly agree, so far as they extend. Though the views of some persons will be more enlarged than the views of other persons, yet there will be no discord in their views. So far as they advance, they will advance in the perfect light of truth, and be united in their sentiments.

2. In heaven the people of God will be perfectly united in affec-

tion. So far as their peculiar character is formed on earth, they are of one heart. They have been renewed by the Holy Spirit. And the "fruit of the Spirit is love." That pure and holy love, which is the moral perfection of the living God, and which he requires of his rational creatures, he produces in the hearts of his people. This love is the essence of their peculiar character, and forms their moral excellence and beauty. In the exercise of holy affections they love God with supreme and ardent love. They repent of their sins. They believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. They delight in his doctrines, commands and promises. They love all objects with impartial affection. And all holy beings they love with complacency. Let any object be placed before the minds of such beings, as are perfectly holy; and in view of it the same affections will arise in all their hearts. Though a vast number of very different objects will pass before the minds of the saints in heaven, the same pure and holy affections will be excited in the hearts of the innumerable multitude. They will be arrayed in the beauty of holiness. And holiness is the bond of perfection, which unites all holy beings in pure and ardent affection and friendship. Being perfect in love, all the members of the church in heaven will be affected in the same manner by every object they shall perceive. When the millions and millions of the redeemed

people of God shall be collected in heaven, there will never arise, during their eternal existence, the least discordant affection, though their hearts will be tried by every object, that can be placed before their minds. Holy love will fill their hearts. And they will dwell in pure and perfect love forever and ever.

3. All the members of the church in heaven will be united in interest. Among selfish creatures there are as many opposing interests, as there are individuals. For every one seeks his own. Hence selfish creatures are in a state of enmity and contention. Though they are alike in their moral character, being supremely and totally selfish, yet they are perfectly opposed and hostile in their interests.—That the members of the church may be perfectly united in interest, it is necessary no one should have any selfish interest; but that all should desire and promote the same objects. No one must seek any object, which all do not desire to have sought. Neither any one, nor any number of the saints in heaven, will seek any selfish or separate interest. Every one will esteem the happiness of the others according to its importance.—And they will be perfectly united in their estimation and promotion of the objects, which God has regarded and pursued in his purposes and exertions. This world has been in a state of constant enmity and violence, on account of the conflicting interests of differ-

ent nations and parties, of different families and individuals. Selfish feelings and separate interests have spread divisions, contentions and distresses over the face of the earth. But though there will forever be in heaven a greater number of persons, than have been upon earth at one time; and probably a greater number than have lived in all past ages; yet no one will ever seek or desire any selfish interest. But every member of Christ's body will seek the good of the whole body. And the whole body will seek the good of every member. They will be of one mind and of one heart respecting every object and every interest, they shall desire and promote.

4. The members of the church in heaven will be united in enjoyment. As they will be united in their knowledge, love and pursuit of the same objects, they will also be united in the objects and sources of their delight and happiness. The sources of their enjoyment will be pure, perfect, infinite and eternal. As their capacities will enlarge, their enjoyment will increase forever. The existence, perfections, designs and conduct of God will forever unfold, with increasing greatness, brightness and glory, to their minds. And it will be seen that "of God and through him and to him are all things." Every creature, every object, and every event, will, in its design, connections and consequences, display the glory of God, and excite and increase the

joy of his people. Hence, it is said to the children of God, "all things are yours." They are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ. And all things will be owned and enjoyed by every saint. The universe will be enjoyed by every child of God in exact proportion to his knowledge and holiness.—The whole number of holy beings in heaven will form but one body in respect to the nature, the objects and the sources of their happiness. While every member of this body will be perfectly united with the other members in sentiment, affection and interest, they will be perfectly united in their pure and holy enjoyments. And they will be perfectly blessed in the full enjoyment of God forever.

This subject now offers to our attention a few remarks.

1. As the people of God will be perfectly united in heaven, there is no reason to believe that he will accept of more than one kind of religion. God will not approve of any religious sentiments, affections, interests and enjoyments, which do not accord with that state, to which he will bring his people in heaven. There is only one kind of religion, that God now requires and approves. There is but one system of religious sentiments, but one kind of religious affections, but one description of religious interests and enjoyments, among the various religious denominations, professions, exertions and interests, that God will ap-

prove in the day of final decision. There is but one religion in heaven; and there is but one religion, that can prepare any person to be in heaven. They whom God will approve in the day of judgment and admit into the kingdom of glory, must be of the same religion. Every religion, which does not agree with the word and the will of God, he now condemns. And what he now condemns he will never approve. In this state of ignorance and imperfection, real religion may exist in persons, who are in some respects different.—But God accepts of nothing, even in pious persons, but what agrees with his law and gospel.

2. They, who have gone from earth to heaven, have been essentially of the same religion. The first person whom God accepted and received to heaven, had the same religious character, which belonged to all other persons, who have gone to heaven. Abel was the first person, that ever left this world and entered the kingdom of God. His justification and salvation rested on the same foundation, on which all other persons rely, who are pardoned and saved from future and endless perdition. He complied with the same conditions of salvation, with which all other persons must comply in order to be saved. And he had the same spirit, and exercised the same holy and gracious affections, which all other persons must exercise, in order to be approved of God on earth and to be admit-

ted into heaven. The religion of Enoch and Noah, and of other saints before the flood, was the same, that God requires of all persons. What Moses and the prophets taught respecting the essence of religion has been confirmed by Jesus Christ and the apostles.—And the spirit of Moses, the spirit of Job, the spirit of Daniel and the spirit of Paul consisted in that holy love, without which no person can enter heaven, or be approved of God on earth. The religion, which God has approved in past ages, is what he now approves; and no other religion will he approve in future ages. That religion, which God approves and which he produces by his holy influence in the innumerable multitude of his redeemed people, is essentially and exactly the same thing in all ages of the world.

3. Since they, who enter heaven, must be perfectly united in their views, feelings, interests and enjoyments, it is of the highest importance that every person be accurately and thoroughly instructed in the true religion.—What often passes for religion in this world is totally different from the religion of heaven. Many persons hope and believe that they are in the way to heaven, though they have no communion in any respect with the true church of God. And they, who are not taught the nature of the only true religion, which unites in one body all the people of God, will deceive and destroy them-

selves. They, who are not taught the true religion, are not lead to heaven; nor are they shown the way. But they are lead to destruction. It is, then, highly important, that every person should have a correct and thorough knowledge of that religion, which is necessary to an admission into the pure, perfect and blessed society of heaven. And it is the duty of every person to be exceedingly watchful and cautious what religious sentiments, affections, interests and enjoyments he approves. For they, who do not in these respects agree with the true church of God, can never have any part or lot in the kingdom of glory.

4. If they, who enter heaven, must be perfectly united, then it is vain to attempt to unite religious professors in such a manner, as does not accord with the union of heaven. Many have desired and attempted to confound all distinctions and differences in respect to religion. And it would doubtless, be pleasing to the enemies of the true church of God, to be received and treated as real christians. But any professed and apparent union of religious professors, that is not founded on the essential and fundamental doctrines of the gospel and maintained by the spirit of disinterested benevolence and directed to the glory of the only living and true God, is wholly vain and foolish. It is not a real union and cannot be permanent. Any religious union of sentiment, affec-

tion, interest and enjoyment, that is not formed in view of God and his law, of Jesus Christ and the gospel, with such a spirit of benevolence and self-denial, as constitutes the essence of moral virtue, must end in discord, hatred and confusion. Such a union is founded on ignorance, or error; and can be maintained only by wickedness and deceit. All such unions will be condemned and dissolved by the supreme head of the true church. Nothing can be more vain and unwise than attempts to unite religious professors in such a manner, as does not agree with the wise and holy unity of heaven.

5. In view of the manner, in which all christians will be united in heaven, we may perceive the proper way to promote a real union of christians on earth. In heaven christians will be understandingly and cordially united in sentiment. And christians on earth cannot really be united in any respect any further than they know and love the sound doctrines of the gospel. There may be a union of ignorance and a union of error among religious professors. But they will not produce the peaceable fruits of righteousness; but the bitter fruits of unrighteousness and ungodliness. Let christians and christian churches unite in the knowledge and love of divine truth and then they may safely and firmly unite their hearts in the spiritual interests and enjoyments of the gospel and of the kingdom of God. And it does es-

pecially become the ministers of the gospel, at this day, to be able truly to say, we have "renounced the hidden things of dishonesty; not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but, by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." With such a spirit and by such conduct, they may greatly promote the real union of christians on earth in sentiment, affection, interest and enjoyment; and be instrumental of their preparation for the pure, perfect and eternal communion of heaven.

ZEBULON.

SERMONS.—No. I.

DIVINE TRUTH THE MEANS OF CHRISTIAN GROWTH.

I. PETER II. 2.—*As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.*

The Lord Jesus Christ commanded Peter, in the most affecting manner, to feed his sheep and his lambs. With the importance of this duty the mind of Peter appears to have been deeply impressed, when he wrote his epistles to his christian brethren. But it is evident, that the apostle could not feed the flock of God, unless they should desire and receive the proper food for their souls. This food consists in the pure and-simple instructions of the gospel.—These instructions, the apostle,

in our text, urges christians to desire for their spiritual nourishment. And he plainly intimates, that their growth in the christian life, depended on their reception of these instructions. It is then the duty of christians to desire and receive the instructions of the gospel, that they may grow. This important duty is enjoined upon christians in the words of our text: "As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow by it." These words place before us the following sentiment, the growth of christians depends on their receiving the instructions of the gospel.

To illustrate this sentiment it is proposed,

I. To show what a proper reception of these instructions implies; and

II. To show that the growth of christians depends on their receiving the instructions of the gospel. It is proposed,

I. To show what a proper reception of the instructions of the gospel implies. Of the great number, who profess to receive these instructions, but few appear to grow in the divine life. And the growth of these, commonly, appears slow and small. These evils, there is reason to believe, arise chiefly from their not receiving the instructions of the gospel. In respect to this subject, there are doubtless many, who wholly deceive and destroy themselves; while others are greatly deceived and injured in their spiritual

interests. It is then highly important to consider what a proper reception of divine instruction implies. On this subject it may be observed,

1. That the instructions of the gospel may be received, they must be understood. There may be a speculative knowledge of divine truth, while it is not cordially received. But it can never be cordially received, without such a knowledge of it. It is through the understanding, that the truth enters and affects the heart. For it cannot enter the heart, unless it be previously perceived and understood. A person may imagine he receives the gospel, while through ignorance, or error, he wholly misunderstands, and rejects its essential instructions. A person's views of these instructions may be very partial and defective, while they are not wholly unknown, nor rejected. But the instructions of the gospel are never received any farther than they are correctly understood in their nature, connections, tendency and consequences. Though it is often supposed, that holy affections do not depend on accurate speculations, yet there is no reason to believe that any affections are holy, unless they are excited and supported by correct views of divine truth. How can a person, with proper affections, receive the true doctrines of human depravity, regeneration, atonement and justification, unless he understand these doctrines? How can a person ex-

ercise repentance towards God and faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ, unless he has a knowledge of these duties? How can a person be truly useful in promoting the glory of God and the happiness of his fellow creatures, without the knowledge of these important objects? How can a person enjoy the pardon of sin, the favor of God, the hope of glory and the earnest of heaven, if he be ignorant or erroneous respecting these blessings? It was a maxim in the church of Rome, that ignorance is the mother of devotion. But so far as ignorance and error prevail, neither real devotion nor real religion in any respect can exist. Real religion is founded on the knowledge of divine truth. Tho' in real religion there is implied something more than accurate speculations, yet it cannot exist while the understanding is ignorant or erroneous. Whatever any persons may profess and whatever may be their feelings, they can never receive, unless they understand, the instructions of the gospel.

2. That the instructions of the gospel may be received, they must not only be understood, but also believed. It can hardly be supposed, that any person can fully and correctly understand and yet disbelieve the instructions of the gospel. For such an understanding of these instructions would imply and include a knowledge of the evidence, by which they are supported. And when the evi-

dence of divine truth is perceived it will carry conviction to the mind, though the truth be hated and rejected by an evil heart. They, who now disbelieve and reject the gospel, will know that it is true ; and then, though they may not love and receive it, yet they will be obliged to believe its essential doctrines. Sometimes by a belief of the truth is meant in the scriptures, the same thing as receiving it with proper affections. But such a faith implies something very different from a speculative conviction, that the gospel and its essential instructions are true.—Persons may mistake a doctrinal conviction of the truth with its effects for saving faith. But as the devils believe there is one God and tremble ; so the devils and wicked men may believe, that all the instructions of the gospel are true and yet derive no saving benefit from such a belief. But though there may be a doctrinal belief of the truth without saving faith, there cannot be such faith without a doctrinal belief of the truth. A person may be fully convinced of the truth of the gospel and of its essential doctrines, while they are not received with holy affections. But no one can ever properly receive the instructions of the gospel without a thorough conviction and a firm belief that they are true.

3. A proper reception of the instructions of the gospel, implies holy love of divine truth. The objects which divine truth pre-

sents to the mind, may excite the affections and produce a high degree of delight, while no holy love of truth exists in the heart. Whether the affections be holy or unholy, can never be known from the nature of the objects, towards which they are excited, but only from the nature of the affections themselves. Many persons, who heard Christ preach, heard him gladly, and did many things, while their affections were unholy, and while they neither truly received nor loved his instructions. There may be false and sinful affections in view of divine truth.—When the truth is received in a proper manner, it is loved for its own beauty and excellence. And then it is spontaneously desired and received, as the new-born babe desires the milk of the breast. Divine truth exactly agrees with the affections, which the Holy Spirit produces in the hearts of christians. But without the pure love of divine truth, it is never rightly received and affords no holy delight. But since real christians have tasted that the Lord is gracious, as new-born babes, they desire the sincere milk of the word. They have that pure and ardent love of the truth, which is so often mentioned in the scriptures. Job says, “Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips ; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.” The Psalmist says, “Thy word is very pure, therefore thy servant loveth it, I

love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold.”—They who have such a pure and holy love of the truth, desire and receive the instructions of the gospel, as the food, the support and nourishment of their souls.

4. The practical influence of divine truth is implied in a proper reception of the instructions of the gospel. When these instructions are clearly understood, firmly believed and greatly loved, they will have a deep and constant influence upon a person’s feelings, designs, pursuits, exertions and enjoyments. No other objects can so deeply affect the human mind, or so powerfully influence the conduct of human beings, as those objects, which are exhibited by the light of divine truth. So far as the truth is rightly received, it affects and governs the conduct. It fills the heart and directs and controls the words and actions. If a person would know whether he properly receives the instructions of the gospel, let him examine his own conduct. For whatever may be our speculative knowledge, our doctrinal belief and professed love of the truth, we do not rightly receive the instructions of the gospel, unless they affect and govern our actions. But if we truly receive the instructions of the gospel, their influence will be manifest in the constancy and vigor of holy affections and exertions.—A healthy child desires and receives his proper food. And he shows that he is healthy, and that

he receives his proper nourishment by his cheerful looks, lively spirits, and sprightly conduct. So a living and healthy christian desires and receives the sincere milk of the word, and is nourished and strengthened by it. And he shows that he is alive and healthy, by his cheerful obedience and faithful exertions in the service of God. No one has any reason to believe, or affords any evidence to other persons, that he truly receives the instructions of the gospel, unless he experience and manifest their practical influence upon his heart and life. A proper reception of the instructions of the gospel implies, that they are understood, believed, loved and obeyed. It is now proposed,

II. To show that the growth of christians depends on their receiving these instructions.

Though this doctrine be evident from the scriptures, yet many persons do not appear to perceive that it is true. Many professors of religion appear to themselves much greater in religion, and in their own opinion grow much faster, when they walk in the darkness of ignorance and error, than they do, when they are brought into the light of divine truth. And some persons, who appear to be real christians, have the lowest and humblest opinion of their religious character and attainments, when they are placed under the most plain and faithful instructions of the gospel. How then does it ap-

pear, that the growth of christians depends on their receiving these instructions? To this question it may be answered,

1. It is only by the instructions of the gospel, that christians can perceive their imperfections.— From these instructions christians may obtain a thorough and correct knowledge of themselves in all respects. They exhibit their relations and their obligations to their creator, their fellow creatures and themselves. By the light of divine truth christians discover the nature, the reason and the importance of the duties, which God requires both in the law and in the gospel. They also discover the evil and hateful nature of sin and the extent and bitterness of their own depravity. From the gospel they discover their ignorance and error, their wretchedness and ill desert. Without the light of divine truth they would never see, that in themselves, they are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. But in the same degree, in which they receive the instructions of the gospel, they have a sight and sense of the greatness of their imperfections. The most ignorant and erroneous persons always possess the greatest degree of self-conceit, self-righteousness and self-sufficiency. But they, who imagine they have already attained and are already perfect, never make any progress in truth and duty. A knowledge of their imperfections is absolutely neces-

sary in order to show christians the nature, the importance and the necessity of their growth in the divine life. But without the light of divine truth they never clearly discover their imperfections. And without a discovery of their imperfections, they would think themselves perfect. And then they would neither grow nor perceive their need of growth in religious attainments.

2. It is by the instructions of the gospel that christians are shown the nature of that perfection, which they are required to pursue and attain. Nothing but the gospel exhibits to any of mankind their real character, condition and duty, as sinful and guilty creatures. Though the gospel provides and offers pardon and life for the chief of sinners, it does not in the least approve of what is sinful, or allow the smallest indulgence in iniquity. It unfolds and confirms the law of God ; and requires the same perfection, which the law requires, not as the foundation of justification, but as necessary to an admission into heaven and as the duty of every human being. The more christians become acquainted with the gospel, the more are they convinced, that it requires they should be a peculiar people, zealous of good works. The gospel requires christians to cleanse themselves from all the filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and to perfect holiness in the fear of God. Without a thorough and faithful reception of the gos-

pel, persons may imagine, that they may continue in sin, because grace abounds. But divine truth teaches christians to see and feel the importance and necessity of being holy, as God is holy, and pure, even as Christ is pure. It is only by the instructions of the gospel, that christians are offered the full pardon of their sins, while they are, at the same time, required and obliged to pursue and attain absolute freedom from sin and perfection in holiness.

3. Christians derive proper motives for growth in religious attainments from the instructions of the gospel. So far as any persons are involved in ignorance and error, they do not perceive the motives, by which they should be induced to advance in the knowledge and practice of their duty. But the instructions of the gospel place before the minds of christians and impress upon their hearts all the motives, which the universe can afford, to do what is right and to hate and avoid what is evil. In view of these motives their holy affections are excited and maintained and their holy exertions receive direction and encouragement. The more clearly christians discern the instructions of the gospel and the more deeply the truth enters their hearts, so much the more are they moved to advance in the ways of God.— If all christians had such views of the gospel as Paul had, they would see and feel the motives, which awakened his affections and

influenced his exertions. And then every christian could say with him—“This one thing I do, forgetting the things that are behind and reaching forth unto those things, that are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” If christians received the truth, as the Lord Jesus Christ received it, when he was on earth, they would follow his holy and perfect example. Then the motives, by which he was moved and governed, would move and govern all their feelings and conduct.— He always acted from a clear sight and deep sense of divine truth. And the motives, which should influence christians, are wholly derived from the pure truths of the gospel. If christians could discover their imperfections and that perfection in holiness, which they ought to attain, without the light of divine truth; yet they could perceive no sufficient motives to exert themselves for a constant and faithful progress in the divine life. Every motive to such progress is derived from the instructions of the gospel.

4. The instructions of the gospel discover to christians the only source, to which they can look for growth in spiritual attainments. For this purpose they cannot safely look to themselves, nor to any outward means, nor to any created beings. The living and true God, as he is revealed in the gospel, is the only source, from which they can derive their christian growth.—

Without the knowledge of God in Christ Jesus, his people would neither grow nor even live.—Christ says to his disciples, “Abide in me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine; ye are the branches; he, that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing.” It is wholly through the truth that christians abide in Christ and that he abides in their hearts. On this spiritual communion between the Lord Jesus Christ and his people, their life and growth depends.—And this communion depends upon their receiving the instructions of the gospel. These instructions so bring God into the view of his people, that they live and grow in him.

In view of God they advance in knowledge, holiness, usefulness and happiness. He is their light and life and strength. Their knowledge of God and their communion with him are begun, maintained and completed by their reception of divine truth. From God, as he is revealed in the gospel, christians derive all their spiritual attainments. Without the instructions of the gospel they can have no such views of God, as are necessary to their progress in the christian life. It is then of the utmost importance, that christians, as new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that

they may grow by it. For their growth depends upon a proper reception of divine truth.

IMPROVEMENT.

1. From what is implied in a proper reception of divine truth, there is reason to conclude that many persons deceive themselves in respect to this duty. Many to whom the instructions of the gospel are sent, do not appear to have their minds properly affected or engaged by divine truth. Nor does it appear to have any proper influence upon their conduct. It is certain that many who hear the truth, do not in a proper manner receive it. There are those who constantly hear the gospel and yet neither understand, nor believe, nor love, nor obey its first, its plainest and most important duties. They resemble the way-side, which the Savior mentions in the parable of the sower. And he says, “When any one heareth the word of the kingdom and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way-side.” There are other hearers of the gospel, who appear to be suddenly and joyfully affected by divine truth; but they resemble the stony places. And the Savior says, “He, that received the seed into stony places, the same is he, that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for

awhile: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended." There are other hearers of the gospel, who speculatively understand its instructions with a great degree of correctness and are convinced of the reality and importance of experimental and practical religion; but they resemble the thorny ground. "He also, that received seed among the thorns, is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word and he becometh unfruitful." These three classes have, doubtless, formed in past ages and do at the present time form far the greater portion of the hearers of the gospel. But no individual of these classes does ever properly and profitably receive divine instruction. If they imagine they perform any duty in the manner, in which they hear the gospel, they wholly deceive themselves.

2. From what a proper reception of divine truth implies, it is evident that no persons will receive it, unless their minds be prepared for it. Whether they, who hear the word of God, receive or reject it, depends upon the state of their own minds.—Persons may read the word of God and hear the preaching of the gospel as long as they live, but they will not receive divine truth without proper attention and proper affections. Without a

good and honest heart no person ever did or ever will receive the pure and holy instructions of the gospel. Divine truth must be desired and regarded with supreme love to God and holy delight in his law, or it will not be received with approbation and complacency. If the minds of persons be divided and distracted by other objects, God and his word can have no place in their hearts. Or if a person's mind be heavy and stupid, it will be unaffected by the great objects, which are exhibited by the light of divine truth. No person will properly receive the word of God, unless he has a heart to obey the following counsel of the wise preacher in Israel. "My son, if thou wilt receive my words and hide my commandments with thee, so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom and apply thine heart to understanding; yea, if thou criest after knowledge and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver and searchest for her as for hid treasure, then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding." Again he says, "When wisdom entereth into thine heart and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul; discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee." Without a holy and ardent affection for divine truth, no person will, as a

new-born babe, desire the sincere milk of the word.

3. If the growth of Christians depends on their proper reception of religious instruction, then christians always decline, whenever they become careless in respect to this duty. While, as new-born babes, they desire the instructions of the gospel, they do, in all respects, advance in the divine life. But if they become indifferent and inattentive to the word of God, they neglect the means of their growth. And then they decline in their views, feelings, exertions and enjoyments. Negligence and carelessness in respect to divine truth are decisive evidence of spiritual declension.

4. Since the growth of christians depends on their receiving the instructions of the gospel, whenever christians are restored from spiritual declension they will experience a renewed and increased desire for divine truth.—As a person, who has been sick, on the return of health, has a strong desire for food; so christians, when recovered from spiritual disorders, will constantly and eagerly desire the pure and wholesome instructions of the gospel, which are the proper food for their souls. This desire for divine truth is the best and surest sign of recovery from spiritual stupidity and declension.

5. Since the growth of christians depends upon the reception of divine truth, a desire for in-

struction is the most favourable appearance in religious professors. It is more favourable than a high degree of confidence, that they are christians. Such confidence in religious professors very generally arises from ignorance and delusion. A desire for instruction is more favourable than a confident profession of religious enjoyment. Such a profession often arises from a false hope and a false faith. Without a desire for divine truth, there is no prospect of christian growth in religious professors. Nor is there any evidence of christian life. The best sign of life and the fairest prospect of growth in the professors of religion consist in an ardent, humble, and obedient desire for spiritual nourishment.

6. If the growth of christians depends on a proper reception of divine instruction, then, in order to their growth, they must remove and avoid whatever prevents their reception of the truth. In our context Peter says, "The word of the Lord endureth forever, and this is the word, which by the gospel is preached unto you."—He then says, "Therefore, laying aside all malice and all guile and hypocrisies and envies and all evil speakings, as new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby; if so be ye have tasted, that the Lord is gracious."

SINNERS CANNOT BE SAVED WITHOUT
REPENTANCE.

There are many sinners, we have reason to conclude, who live in the hope that they shall be saved when they die, without exercising that repentance which is described and required in the word of God. Some sinners appear to hope for salvation on one ground, and some on another. Some sinners appear to hope for salvation on the ground of their morality. Others hope for it, because, in their view, they are such small sinners, that it would be unjust in God not to save them. And others hope for it, because they think God is so merciful, that he will save all mankind, let them live and die as they will. But if such hopes are delusive and must fail in the trying hour, it is desirable, if possible, to convince sinners of it, before it is forever too late.—I shall attempt, therefore, to make it appear that sinners cannot be saved without repentance. To do this, I propose in the first place to describe repentance, and then show why sinners cannot be saved without it.

1. Repentance is to be described. Repentance is a change of mind in respect to sin. The feelings of a true penitent towards sin, are opposite to the feelings that he once had towards it. While impenitent, he loved sin, and delighted in the practice of it. But now he hates sin for its own sake, or on account of its own inherent

turpitude and baseness. Sin consists primarily in selfishness, in a person's loving himself as much as he is bound and required to love God; and it operates in supreme and deadly enmity to him. The true penitent no longer loves and cherishes this selfish, sordid temper, but feels it to be the greatest of evils, the most grievous of burdens, from which he longs to be delivered. He loathes, abases and condemns himself on account of his sinfulness, and turns from it with all his heart. And he utters the feelings and desires of his broken and contrite spirit in such language as this: "Mine iniquities are gone over my head. I am troubled, and bowed down greatly. I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Such exercises and feelings were evidently included in the repentance of Job, in the repentance of David, and in the repentance of every humbled sinner, whose character is delineated in scripture. It may also be remarked, that although sin is the object of repentance; yet this is called "repentance towards God," because it flows from supreme love to God, against whom sin is committed, and whose character and government the commission of it tends to injure. Repentance, then, is a change of mind in respect to sin, which arises from a change of feelings towards God and his glorious government, and which issues in a new and holy life. I am to show,

II. Why sinners cannot be saved without repentance.

The following are some of the reasons.

1. Sinners cannot be saved without repentance, because without this they cannot be pardoned, cannot be freed from the penalty of the law. Pardon is procured only by Christ's atonement, which prepares the way for the bestowment of that blessing upon penitent sinners; but does not prepare the way for the bestowment of it upon the impenitent. It would be just as inconsistent for God to pardon the impenitent through the atonement, as it would be for him to pardon the penitent, had no atonement been made. The impenitent are God's mortal foes. Hence, were he to pardon them he would deny himself, and blot out all the glory of his reign forever. In a word, should God remit the penalty of his law to the impenitent transgressors of it, he would exhibit himself, not as the hater and punisher, but as the lover and rewarder of iniquity; and his character would sink at once in the view of all his intelligent creatures. He can no more do it, therefore, than he can cease to be God. Jesus Christ is set forth to be a propitiation, that God's righteousness may be declared, and that he may be just, in justifying or pardoning the penitent and believing. Accordingly, he promises to forgive the penitent, but not the impenitent, and has

made repentance an indispensable condition of forgiveness. Now, since God never does, and never can pardon the impenitent, they cannot be saved without repentance; for they cannot be saved without being pardoned. Surely, those who are under the curse of God's law, and on whom his wrath abideth, cannot see life. I add,

2. That without repentance, sinners cannot participate in that pure and holy happiness, which is an essential part of the gospel salvation. Were it not inconsistent with the moral rectitude of God, for him to forgive the impenitent, and were he to do it, still, it would be impossible for them to enjoy the blessedness of heaven. Love to God and complacency in his government are essential to true happiness, which is to be found only in him. But the impenitent are hostile to God, and highly displeased with all the operations of his hand. How then could they be happy in heaven itself, where they would be forever surrounded with objects of their supreme aversion and abhorrence? The transcendent manifestations of Jehovah's glory, which swell the joys and wake the songs of the celestial hosts, who love him, must be a source of ceaseless anguish to all who hate him, to all the impenitent. It is impossible in the nature of things for them to be saved, for them to be made happy with such hearts as they possess. Their sinfulness, their impenitence must totally disqualify them for

any true enjoyment, either in this world, or in that which is to come.

1. If what has been said of the nature of repentance is true, then they are mistaken, who suppose it consists in a person's being sorry for sin, because it exposes him to punishment, or in wishing that he had not been born a sinner, or that Adam had never fallen, or that moral evil had never entered the universe. If a just view has been given of repentance, then such sorrows and wishes constitute no essential part of it. They are, indeed, if not associated with other affections, the sorrows and desires of an impenitent heart. He who truly repents, is delivered from that worldly sorrow which the slavish fear of punishment produces. In his heart, he says amen to the curse of the law, and accepts the punishment of his iniquities, as God requires. And instead of wishing that he had been born sinless, or that Adam had retained his original purity, or that evil had never existed, or that God's plan of government had been different from what it is; instead of having such idle wishes, such criminal desires, he voluntarily lies in the deepest self-abasement before God, on account of the treasonable part he has acted against him, and desires and prays to be saved from sin and made holy. And while he has an affecting view of the evil of sin, and of its tendency to reproach the divine character, and destroy the universe, he rejoices in the assur-

ance that God will cause even this evil, hateful, all-destructive thing to praise him, and promote the blessedness of his holy kingdom.

2. How gloomy are the prospects of impenitent sinners! We have seen that there is both a moral and natural impossibility of their ever being saved in impenitence. There is no true happiness for them on earth. There is no true happiness for them in heaven. There is no true happiness for them in the universe. They must, persisting in their impenitence, be eternally miserable.— They do feel miserable *here*, in proportion to the clearness and strength of their impressions of divine truth. And when they shall be summoned into the world of spirits, and open their eyes to its cloudless light, to shut them no more forever; when they shall be made to see God, and Christ, and all spiritual objects, as far as the impenitent *can* see them;— when divine truth shall thus shine into their understandings and consciences in all the brightness of eternity, their souls must, in the nature of things, be filled with the keenest remorse, and anguish, and despair. And besides, that God who is faithful to execute his threatnings, as well as to fulfil his promises, will inflict upon them the just but awful penalty of his law. Nothing then awaits them, but the endless wailings and torments of the damned.

Finally. By all the tender and solemn considerations which have been suggested, let sinners be persuaded to repent and turn to God without delay. Whatever they do short of repentance, they are going away farther and farther from God, from Christ, from heaven; and are ripening for destruction, and hastening to it. But if they will now only exercise repentance towards God, he will graciously pardon them and save them with an everlasting salvation. He will prepare them to engage in the holy employments of heaven, and will put them in possession of its pure and imperishable joys.

THEOPHILUS.

THE RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE OF MRS.
P —— AS STATED IN A SERMON,
PREACHED SOON AFTER HER DEATH.

“On the first Sabbath in June, 18—, Mrs. P —— made a public profession of the religion of Christ. The account which she then gave of her religious exercises, was clear and satisfactory. In this statement, she said, “that ten years since, my attention was drawn to the great realities of religion, and my mind impressed with them. Unwilling to be saved in the gospel way, I went about to establish a righteousness of my own. God was, then, pleased to show me my error.” Her conviction became less powerful and pungent, but still continued. Four

years before her union with the church, her conviction returned with great force and pungency.— The following are nearly her own words concerning herself at that time :—“ I then saw myself justly condemned by God’s holy law, and thought, that if ever I was saved, it must be through the merits of the Redeemer. I felt great opposition to the doctrine of sovereign grace; but I think that God was pleased to reconcile me to it, and to give me to rejoice in it as the only ground of hope for perishing sinners.” She remained much in doubt concerning her spiritual state, until the winter before she made a public profession of religion.— While hearing a sermon on the unreasonableness of being unresolved concerning religion, she said, “ it pleased God to remove all doubts from my mind, and to give me to rejoice in him with great joy of heart. I had, also, such a view of the condescension and love of Christ in suffering for sinners, as I never had before. There seemed to be a new song put into my mouth, even, praise to God.— Since that time, I have had fears, that I was deceived; but I think, as far as I know my own heart, that I love religion and have a desire to live a holy life.” From the time of her making a public profession of religion, until her sickness, she had an increasing sense of the sinfulness of her heart and a growing attachment to the peculiar doctrines of the gospel. She was confined with sickness,

nearly two years and a half. During three or four of the first weeks, she was in great darkness and doubt. After this, she was for a time very calm. As a general fact, she was in great darkness and doubt of mind, for the three succeeding months. It was her wish to be considered and prayed for as an unrenewed person. Her fears were, that she had deceived herself and others, though without any intention or apprehension of it, at the time. At length, her doubts and fears were removed and her soul was filled with joy and peace. Her views were so clear and her evidence so decisive and full, that she thought she could never more doubt and would not again despair. Until the winter before her death, she remained, generally, calm in mind; but that season, she was under occasional darkness and dejection. It did not appear that she ever fell into that despairing state, after the three months which have been mentioned. From time to time, she had those clear discoveries and lively views of spiritual things, which raised her above her sufferings, and led her to say, that it would be ingratitude to God ever again to doubt. It may be proper to observe, when she was relieved from her state of darkness and distress, that she was conscious of having the same exercises and feelings which she had when she first entertained a hope. In her most lucid intervals, it was evident to her mind, that she experienced

a real change of heart, at the time she first supposed, and before she united with the church. One season of light and peace deserves special notice. It was during the last winter. The most correct view of it may be given, by using her own words. "I am as happy as I can be. I do not know that I am capable of sustaining any more happiness." Her light, joy and enjoyment appeared to be as great as she was able to bear. This state of feeling lasted two or three days.

It may be useful to state the evident causes of her fears and doubts. *Her bodily disease.* It led her to view every thing on the darkest side. *The sense she had of the sinfulness of her heart.*—It did not seem to her, that one whose heart was so sinful, could be a christian. *She feared that her faith, humility and confidence in God and resignation to his will, originated in selfishness,* and that she might, after all, be deceived. During the last months of her sickness, which was very severe, much of her fear and discouragement arose from this consideration, *that she felt no more willing to endure the distress that was laid upon her.* She had been so long and so frequently in agonies of body, that she could not think upon the return of them, but with dread and horror. She said, that if she could feel entirely willing, at all times, to endure all the distress laid upon her, she should think that she was a real

christian. At sometimes she felt willing; at others, she was ready to shrink from it. Another thing which evidently led her to form conclusions against herself, was, *that she judged more from mere feeling, than from faith, submission and other christian graces.* One cause more should be mentioned. *It was a sense of the importance of religion.* This was so great as often to excite strong fears of being deceived. The danger and the consequences of entertaining a false hope were deeply impressed upon her mind, and led her to doubt whether her hope might not be that of the hypocrite, which should perish.

Religion was the great and leading subject of her habitual thoughts. She often enjoyed its consolations and almost continually its supports. Often was she heard to say, were it not for religion, I must sink under my distress. It is all the consolation which I have. She desired to be entirely conformed to God and to have no will of her own, and that all she endured might be for his glory. More than once, she told me that she had but one fear, or concern, which was that she should not have patience to endure what should be laid upon her. She had resigned herself, her relations and her all to God, and felt entirely willing to leave all with

him and go at his call. Death seemed to have no terrors. It was evident that she had an uncommon experimental acquaintance with religious truths. What many talk about, concerning religion, she actually felt. Sin was her great aversion, and for it she desired to be deeply humbled before God. She had a great sense of the goodness of God, and of constant dependance on him for every spiritual and temporal favor. Perhaps, no instance occurs, in which persons are more desirous of being faithfully dealt with in their religious concerns. It was her repeated request to be carefully examined as to her spiritual views and exercises. "How dreadful," she observed, "would it be, if after all, I should be deceived." She had great anxiety for those of her connections who were strangers to religion, and without hope and without God in the world. She met death undismayed. On the day of her death, she sent for me. When I arrived she said, she had but a few hours to live. She was asked, if death were alarming to her. The reply was, no. It is believed, and upon good evidence, that she left the world in peace, and has gone to be with Christ. In her there is a new evidence of the truth and reality of experimental religion."

RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

VIEW OF THE MISSIONS UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE AMERICAN BOARD OF
COMMISSIONERS FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS.

The Board has established missions, in the order of time in which they will now be named, at Bombay—in Ceylon—among the Cherokees, Choctaws, and Cherokees of the Arkansaw—at the Sandwich Islands—and in Western Asia. It has, also, taken measures to ascertain the religious and moral state of the southern and western countries of South America, with a view to missionary labors in that interesting part of the world.

I. *Mission at Bombay.*

Commenced in 1813. This mission has three stations.—Bombay, Mahim, and Tannah.

Bombay.—A large city on an island of the same name. It is the capital of all the British possessions on the western side of the peninsula, and is the primary seat of the mission.

Rev. Gordon Hall, missionary; Mr. James Garrett, printer.

Mahim.—Six miles from Bombay, on the north part of the island.

Rev. Allen Graves, missionary.

Tannah.—The principal town on the island of Salsette, twenty-five miles from Bombay.

Rev. John Nichols, missionary.

II. *Mission in Ceylon.*

This mission was established in the district of Jaffna, which is the northern extremity of the island of Ceylon, in October, 1816. It has five stations—Tillipally, Batticotta, Oodooville, Panditeripo, and Manepy.

Tillipally.—Nine miles north from Jaffnapatam.

Rev. Daniel Poor, missionary; Nicholas Permander, native preacher.

Batticotta.—Six miles north-west of Jaffnapatam.

Rev. Benjamin C. Meigs, and Rev. Henry Woodward, missionaries. Gabriel Tissera, native preacher.

Oodooville.—Five miles north of Jaffnapatam.

Rev. Miron Winslow, missionary. Francis Malleappa, native preacher.

Panditeripo.—Nine miles north-west of Jaffnapatam.

Rev. John Scudder, M. D. missionary. George Koch, native medical assistant.

Manepy.—Four miles and a half north-west of Jaffnapatam.

Rev. Levi Spaulding, missionary.

III. *Mission among the Cherokees.*

On the 13th of January, 1817, Mr. Kingsbury arrived at Chichamaugh, since called Brainerd, and commenced preparations for an establishment there. The mission among the Cherokees has, at the present time, six stations—Brainerd, Creek-Path, Carmel, Hightower, Willstown, and Haws.

Brainerd.—The oldest station of the Board among the Indians. It is situated within the chartered limits of Tennessee, on the Chickamaugh Creek, 250 miles N. W. of Augusta; 150 S. E. of Nashville; and 110 S. W. of Knoxville.

Rev. Ard Hoyt, miss.; Dr. Elizur Butler, Physician; Mr. Sylvester Ellis, schoolmaster; Messrs. John Vail, Henry Parker, and Frederick Elsworth, farmers;

Messrs. Erastus Dean, and Ainsworth E. Blunt, mechanics.

Carmel.—Formerly called Taloney. Sixty-two miles S. E. from Brainerd, on what is called the Federal Road. A school was established here in May 1820. Mr. Hall resided here six months before the opening of the school.

Rev. Daniel S. Buttrick, missionary, and Mr. Moody Hall, schoolmaster.

Creek Path.—One hundred miles W. S. W. of Brainerd. A school was established here in April 1820.

Rev. William Potter, missionary.

Hightower.—On a river named E-tow-ee, but corrupted into Hightower; eighty miles S. S. E. of Brainerd, and thirty-five miles west of south from Carmel. A school commenced in April of the present year.

Mr. Isaac Proctor, schoolmaster.

Willstown.—About fifty miles S. W. of Brainerd. A school was established at this station, in May last.

Rev. William Chamberlain, missionary.

Haweis.—About sixty S. of Brainerd. Preparations are making for a school.

Mr. John C. Elsworth, schoolmaster.

IV. *Mission among the Choctaws.*

The mission among the Cherokees being in successful operation, Mr. Kingsbury and Mr. Williams left Brainerd, about the first of June 1818, for the Choctaw nation. They selected a site for their station, and about the 15th of August felled the first tree.—“The place was entirely new, and covered with lofty trees; but the ancient mounds, which here and there appeared, shewed, that it had been once the habitation of men.” The station was named Elliot, in honor of the “Apostle

of the American Indians.” This mission has six stations.—Elliot, Mayhew, Bethel, Emmaus, and two which have not yet received names.

Elliot.—Within the chartered limits of the state of Mississippi; on the Yalo Busha creek; about forty miles above its junction with the Yazoo; 400 miles W. S. W. of Brainerd; and 145 from the Walnut Hills, on the Mississippi.

Mr. Cyrus Byington, licensed preacher and missionary; Dr. Wm. W. Pride, physician; Mr. Joel Wood, schoolmaster; and Messrs. John Smith and Zechariah Howes, farmers.

Mayhew.—On the Ook-tib-beha-creek, twelve miles above its junction with the Tombigbee, and 100 miles east of Elliot. Commenced in the spring of 1820.

Rev. Cyrus Kingsbury, missionary and superintendent of the Choctaw mission; Mr. William Hooper, schoolmaster; Mr. Calvin Cushman, farmer; and Messrs. Philo P. Stewart and Samuel Wisner, mechanics.

Bethel.—On the Natchez road, south-west of Mayhew. A school was established here in November 1821.

Mr. Loring S. Williams, schoolmaster.

Mr. Stephen B. Macomber, schoolmaster, resides here for the present.

Emmaus.—About 140 miles southeasterly from Mayhew. Commenced near the latter part of 1822.

Mr. Moses Jewell, schoolmaster, and Mr. Anson Gleason, mechanic.

Mr. Elijah Bardwell, farmer, and Mr. Anson Dyer, schoolmaster, commenced preparations for a school near the centre of the Six Towns, during the summer past.

Rev. Alfred Wright, missionary, resides in this district.

Mr. Adin C. Gibbs, schoolmaster, has also commenced a school, recently, in the neighborhood of Mingo Moo-sha-la-tubbee, in the S. D. District of the nation.

Mr. Samuel Moseley, licensed preacher and missionary; Messrs. David Wright and David Gage, schoolmasters; Messrs. William Holland and Josiah Hemmingway, farmers; and Mr. Ebenezer Bliss, mechanic; are on their way to Brainerd, where they will receive such an ultimate destination, as shall appear to be best when the Corresponding Secretary shall arrive there, on his contemplated visit to the stations situated on this side of the Mississippi.

V. *Mission among the Cherokees of the Arkansaw.*

Commenced in the year 1820. There is only the station of

Dwight.—On the west side of Illinois creek; four miles north of the Arkansaw river; and 500 miles from the junction of the Arkansaw with the Mississippi, following the course of the river.

Rev. Alfred Finney and Rev. Cephas Washburn, Missionaries; and Messrs. Jacob Hitchcock, and James Orr, Farmers.

Mr. Asa Hitchcock, Mechanic, is on his way to join this mission.

VI. *Mission at the Sandwich Islands.*

Established in April 1820. The principal station is Hanaroora, on the island of Woahoo. Another station is at Wymai, on the island of Atooi. The present distribution of laborers is not yet known, as intelligence has not been received of the arrival of the reinforcement, which embarked at New Haven near the close of last year.

Rev. Hiram Bingham, Rev. Asa Thurston, Rev. William Richards, Rev. Charles S. Stewart, and Rev. Artemas Bishop, missionaries;—Dr. Abraham Blatchely, physician; Messrs. Samuel Whitney, Joseph Goodrich, and James Ely, licensed preachers and assistant missionaries; Mr. Levi Chamberlain, superintendent of secular concerns; Mr. Elisha Loomis, printer; and Thomas Hopoo, John Honoree, and George Sandwich, native assistants.

VII. *Mission to Western Asia.*

Commenced in 1820. At present, part of the missionaries reside at Malta, and part at Jerusalem.

Malta.—Rev. Daniel Temple, Rev. William Goodell, and Rev. Isaac Bird, missionaries.

Jerusalem.—Rev. Pliny Fisk, and Rev. Jonas King, missionaries.

VIII. *South America.*

On the 25th of July last, Mr. John C. Bridgman and Mr. Theophilus Parvin—the former from the Theological Seminary in Andover, and the latter from the Theological Seminary in Princeton,—sailed from Boston for Buenos Ayres. Their object is, to circulate Bibles and Tracts, and to ascertain the religious and moral state of the interesting countries, in the southern and western parts of that continent.

IX. *Foreign Mission School.*

Situated in Cornwall, Con. Established in 1816.

Rev. Herman Daggett, principal, and Mr. John H. Prentice, assistant.

Mis. Herald.

THE
CHRISTIAN MAGAZINE.

VOL. I.

FEBRUARY, 1824.

No. 2.

ORIGINAL COMMUNICATIONS.

SAINTS DELIGHT TO KNOW WHAT THE
BIBLE CONTAINS.

Saints have the spirit of their heavenly Father. They do, in some degree, possess that spirit of universal and disinterested benevolence, which God possessed from eternity, which he displays in time and which he will continue to display for ever. They are the real friends of God and heartily attached to his character and conduct. There is, therefore, reason to suppose, that they delight in the knowledge of divine truth. This supposition is confirmed by the character, which is ascribed to saints in the scriptures. It is written, "Blessed is the man, that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night." The hundred and nineteenth psalm describes the excellence of the sacred scriptures, and the pleasure of saints in the knowledge of divine truth. The

psalmist says unto God, "Thy word have I hid in my heart.—Teach me thy statutes. I will meditate in thy precepts. I will delight myself in thy statutes.—Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law. Thy testimonies are my delight and my counsellors. Thy statutes have been my song in the house of my pilgrimage. The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver. O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day. I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold. How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth." The psalm, from which these texts are taken, was composed for the church of God, and designed to express the feelings of real saints. And it clearly shows, that they have a high degree of delight in the knowledge of what is contained in the scriptures.

But it is my main object to show why saints delight to know what is contained in the Bible. Here it may be observed,

1. They delight to know what the Bible contains, because it reveals the true character of God. The works of creation and providence display the perfections of the divine character, but with less clearness than they are revealed in the scriptures. Mankind, for thousands of years, have generally been destitute of divine revelation. And the unhappy consequence has been, that they have also been destitute of the true knowledge of God. But they, who have been favoured with the Bible, have generally known God, though they have not glorified him as God. This proves, that the Bible clearly discovers the divine character. And all saints love the true character of God. They, therefore, desire the knowledge of the scriptures, which were designed to display the divine perfections. They desire to know all, that can be known of the power, knowledge, wisdom, goodness, justice, mercy, faithfulness, and sovereignty of God. And since God has, in the scriptures, given the fullest discoveries of his attributes, they desire to understand his word, that they may learn his natural and moral excellencies. The sacred writers abound in the most animated descriptions of the Deity. And these descriptions afford peculiar interest and satisfaction to the friends of God. They love to hear the character of God described, and are pleased to know that he is supremely great and supremely good. The very character of God,

which is so painful to sinners, is extremely delightful to saints.— They love holy benevolence in all its branches, for its supreme excellence and beauty. By the light of divine truth they perceive, that the whole moral character of God consists in disinterested benevolence; and that such benevolence governs all his natural attributes and all his designs and conduct. The whole system of truth, which is revealed in the scriptures, gives the most glorious and delightful exhibition of the divine character, which is to saints the object of their supreme attention. And for this reason, they delight to know what the Bible contains.

2. Saints delight to know, what the Bible contains, because it reveals the supreme and ultimate end of God in all his works. This end could never be discovered by rational creatures, without a divine revelation. Though enlightened heathens have formed some proper conceptions of the natural and moral attributes of God; yet they never could discover his designs in the works of creation and providence. And it is easy to see, that it is impossible to discover what God intends, unless he reveals his intentions. God knows our intentions, because he can look into our hearts. But we cannot know his intentions by intuition. We cannot look into his heart, and discover his designs.— But as God has formed his determinations from eternity, he is able

to reveal as many of his designs as he pleases. And it is happy for us, that he has, in the scriptures, revealed his original and eternal purpose, which he purposed in Christ Jesus. The Bible unfolds the purposes of divine wisdom and grace. By his word God lets us know the end, at which he aims, in all his conduct from the beginning to the end of time. This knowledge throws light upon ourselves, upon the world in which we live, upon all the objects that surround us, and upon the darkest dispensations of providence. Such light is exceedingly pleasant to every benevolent person; for such persons believe that God formed all his purposes in the exercise of perfect benevolence.—Hence, they choose to know the designs of God, rather than to know the designs of all the courts of Europe, of all the nations of the earth, of all the angels of heaven, of all the intelligent creatures in the universe. For the designs of creatures are subjected to the designs of God, whose counsel shall stand, and who will do all his pleasure. Hence, saints had rather understand the Bible than all other books, which, without the Bible, would leave them in total ignorance of the most important and the most desirable knowledge.—The divine purposes are the highest source of happiness to the friends of God. Nothing gives greater joy to the saints and angels in heaven than the knowledge of the divine decrees. And the

same knowledge affords to saints on earth the highest and purest enjoyment. They love to have the Bible explained, and the supreme end of God in his decrees, and in his conduct, unfolded in all its greatness, and in all its glory. Their hearts are warmed with divine love and filled with holy joy in view of the supreme and ultimate end of God, in all the wonders of creation, providence and redemption.

3. Saints delight in knowing what is contained in the Bible, because it reveals the conduct of God. A great part of the Bible is historical, and gives the most complete and authentic account of the divine conduct, from the beginning of the world to the days of the apostles. This sacred volume relates the creation of the heavens and the earth, and gives us the only certain account of the commencement of time. It relates the conduct of God towards the angels of light and the angels of darkness. It relates the conduct of God towards mankind, both before and after the fall. It gives a comprehensive history of the providential dealings of God towards the world before the flood, and from that event unto the death of Christ. It informs us of the various methods which God took to prepare the world for the advent of Christ, and for his death on the cross. These were in themselves great events, but still greater in their connections. They were necessary to effect the great pur-

pose of redemption, and therefore displayed, in the strongest light, the power, the wisdom, the faithfulness and the sovereignty of God. It is delightful to saints to trace the conduct of God in the execution of his gracious designs. Profane history gives an account of the views, designs and conduct of men. But sacred history informs us how God has ordered and directed all things in the course of his providence to answer his own designs, and promote the highest interests of the universe. Hence sacred history is vastly more agreeable to the friends of God than all other histories. Saints are delighted to see how God has smiled and frowned, how he has saved and destroyed, how he has exalted and debased kingdoms and nations, for the benefit of his church, and the accomplishment of his predictions and promises. In the sacred history, they see how floods and flames, storms and tempests, convulsions and revolutions, and all the great events of providence have concurred to promote the glory of God in the salvation of his people. The history of the divine conduct, which is revealed and related in the scriptures, most tenderly and joyfully affects the hearts of all pious persons.

4. Saints delight to understand the Bible, because it clearly describes the native character and condition of mankind. No philosophers, historians, nor poets, have fully unfolded the corruption of the human heart. Though they

have told us how mankind, in different ages and parts of the world have acted; yet they have never told us how they have felt, nor fully described the moral depravity of the human heart. But God, whose searches every heart, has fully revealed the human heart in his word. In his word, he has drawn the character and condition of mankind to the life. And pious persons desire to know their own hearts and to see the fountain of iniquity, which exists within themselves. They desire to understand what God has taught concerning the fall of man, the degeneracy of human nature, and the total selfishness of the human heart, that they may know how mankind appear in the sight of God, and what they deserve at the hands of his justice. Indeed, they desire to know the real character of all intelligent beings in heaven, earth and hell. And since God has drawn the character of all his moral subjects, they desire to understand the true sense of every passage of scripture, which delineates the character of any moral agent. They desire to know the truth, and the whole truth, respecting the hearts of moral beings. Yet the native character and condition of mankind, on account of their connection with the purpose and the glory of God in the redemption of sinners, are subjects of the deepest attention to saints. And they are highly gratified, as well as interested, by the knowledge of the truth, on these

important subjects. It is only in view of the moral depravity, the ill-desert and vileness of human beings, that they can discern the height and depth, and length and breadth of divine grace in their salvation.

5. Saints desire to know what the Bible contains, because it reveals the will of God. It is the language of every christian's heart, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" The Bible reveals the conditions of eternal life, and shews all persons how they may enjoy the favor of God forever. And saints desire to know these conditions, however self-denying they may be. They are not afraid that God will require more than he ought to require, and therefore they are willing and desirous to hear the law and the gospel explained in their full extent. They are willing to know their whole duty, and therefore they are willing to understand every doctrine, every precept, and every prohibition, which is contained in the Bible. It is the desire and prayer of their hearts, that they may know what is that good and perfect will of God, which he has revealed in the scriptures. And whenever the doctrines and duties of the gospel are clearly explained and forcibly inculcated, their hearts rejoice, as if they had found great spoil. In whatever degree saints love to do their duty, in the same degree they love to understand it. It is, therefore, with peculiar pleasure, that they study

and learn from the holy scriptures what is pleasing to God.

6. Saints delight in the scriptures, because they unfold the scenes of the invisible world.—Without the Bible, we could know nothing of the scenes beyond the grave. The heathen have always groped in darkness in respect to a future state. Their greatest philosophers and moralists were left in extravagant conjectures respecting the existence and condition of the soul after death. They did not know whether it would exist; and if it did, whether it would be happy or miserable; and if happy, in what its happiness would consist; or if miserable, in what its misery would consist. But the Bible has clearly revealed its future and eternal existence. It assures saints of future existence, and of eternal happiness in the enjoyment of God, and of all the blessings and glories of his holy kingdom. It describes heaven and hell; and places the scenes of eternity in the most glorious, amiable and awful light. Now, saints desire to exist forever, and to enjoy the presence and favor of God. Hence, their hearts are filled with love, hope and joy, while the scriptures are opened, and they behold by the light of truth such glorious and boundless prospects. It may be added,

7. Saints delight to understand the Bible, because it reveals the final issue of all things. According to the scriptures, all creatures and all events will be subservient

to the most perfect exhibition and gratification of the infinite goodness of God, and to the greatest extent of holiness and happiness, that can exist in created beings. All the works of God in creation, providence and redemption, will terminate in the wisest and best manner, that he can desire or conceive. Saints desire that the highest holiness and happiness of the universe may be promoted and secured. And it is the comfort and joy of their hearts, that there never will exist under the divine government any creature or any event, but what is connected with the greatest good of the intelligent universe. They rejoice that God will move and turn all things, so as to accomplish the greatest, wisest and best ends. They are assured by the scriptures of truth, that they can desire nothing better respecting their Creator, their fellow creatures and themselves, than what God is disposed and determined to accomplish. It is therefore, with the highest enjoyment and satisfaction, that saints obtain from the Bible the knowledge of the happy and glorious result of all things.

JUDAH.

THE TROUBLES AND COMFORTS OF CHRISTIANS ON EARTH.

It is written, "Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward." Numerous and constant troubles are the portion of human beings in the present life. They who

become truly pious, are not secured against the evils and sorrows which abound in this evil world. In their persons, in their estates and connections, they are liable to many afflictions. Weakness and sickness, decay and death, attend their bodies. And many and various are the evils, which they experience in respect to their spiritual and eternal interests. It is very certain, that the children of God may in this life frequently walk in the midst of trouble. And besides the common troubles of human life, they experience some troubles, which are peculiar to themselves.

They are usually troubled on account of their past sins. They are sinners by nature. And often their early days are wholly passed in the practice of iniquity.—When they are brought to the knowledge of the truth, and are rightly affected by their past conduct, they have much trouble and sorrow of heart for their sins and follies. To real penitents, God says, "Then shall ye remember your own evil ways and your doings, that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and abominations." Though the people of God be pardoned and will be saved from the deserved punishment of their iniquities, yet their sinful conduct is not, on that account, the less evil and hateful in itself. And often their past conduct appears so sinful, that it greatly oppresses and afflicts their spirits.

They are troubled by their present imperfection. They know that they ought to be perfectly holy. And they labor to guard against whatever is sinful. Yet they find themselves in a great degree burdened and troubled by the power and defilement of iniquity. They are far from that supreme and constant love to God, which he most justly requires. Nor have they that constant and impartial affection to their fellow creatures, which they are sensible they ought to feel and express. Nothing less than perfect holiness is, in the view of pious persons, their present duty. Holiness is, in their sight, perfectly excellent and beautiful, and sin is vile and hateful. Their sinful imperfection, therefore, is a constant grief to their hearts. The Psalmist says, "Mine iniquities are gone over mine head; as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me.—I am troubled; I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long." The Apostle, having described his sinful imperfection, exclaims, "O wretched man, that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Sin is the greatest and worst of evils. And so long as christians are not perfectly holy, they will be troubled by their sinful imperfection.

Again—They are troubled by the evils, which exist in the church. They are strongly attached to the cause and kingdom of God on earth. The interests of his kingdom are their interests.

And whatever opposes the prosperity and enlargement of Zion is grievous and afflictive to their own souls. But the errors and sins, the enemies and divisions, which are in themselves opposed to the purity and happiness of the christian church, are very numerous.—In all past ages, great and violent opposition to the truth, as it is in Jesus, has existed in the world. And many persons who profess to be christians, are among the most powerful and bitter enemies of the gospel. At the present day, the true church of God is opposed and weakened by many errors, and by many enemies. If then christians look to the whole church of Christ on earth, they see many evils, by which they have reason to be troubled. If they look to the single church, to which they belong, they will find many evils, that are afflictive and painful.—There are few single churches, which have not such members, as afford no pleasing evidence of true friendship and faithfulness to the Lord Jesus Christ. And in most churches, there are such members, as exhibit sorrowful appearances of impenitence and impiety. What the Apostle said of religious professors in his day may be truly said at the present time—"Many walk, of whom I have told you often and now tell you, even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame; who mind earthly

things." Among the greatest evils and troubles, which christians experience, are the errors and sins, which exist in professors of the true and holy gospel.

Again—Christians are troubled by the evils which abound in the world. They know that mankind by nature are universally and totally estranged from God; that they are subjected to his holy displeasure and condemned by the law to the pains of endless death. They see the greater part of their fellow creatures are involved in the grossest ignorance and the most destructive delusions and superstitions. The Psalmist says, "The dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty." The people of God have often seen the world filled with violence, and covered with blood. And this world still affords constant and abundant occasion for grief and sorrow to such persons, as either fear God or regard man. By the wickedness and misery, which so generally prevail on the earth, the people of God are often obliged to "walk in the midst of trouble." The evils and troubles, which have now been mentioned, are, in a greater or less degree, common to all pious persons. And they are liable to be distressed and disheartened by these great evils and constant troubles.

But let us now turn our attention to the bright and pleasant side of things; and consider the comforts of christians, even in the midst of their troubles. In all their

troubles there is a sufficient and immutable foundation for their consolation. God is the comfort of his people. To his people he says, "I, even I, am he, that comforteth you." In God, his people see infinite perfection and excellence. His knowledge, power, wisdom, goodness, mercy and faithfulness are unchangeable. In the exercise of perfect and infinite goodness, he has made, and preserves, and governs all things. And he will cause all things to subsist for his own glory, and the glory of his kingdom and the good of his people. Under his perfect government there can exist nothing, but what shall be, on the whole, wisest and best. In view of his perfections, designs and works, the people of God will be raised above all their troubles, and comforted with everlasting consolation. When they truly turn to God and rest upon him, they now find support and relief. To his afflicted disciples, the Savior said, "Let not your hearts be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me." True faith in God and the Lord Jesus Christ will relieve and remove the troubles of his people, and afford peace and joy to their hearts. In God there is a sufficient and immoveable foundation of comfort to his people, whatever may be their troubles.

And God promises to comfort his people. By Isaiah, it is written, "The Lord shall comfort Zion; he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wil-

derness as Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein; thanksgiving and the voice of melody." By Jeremiah, God says, "I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and make them rejoice from their sorrow.—My people shall be satisfied with my goodness." And the Savior says, "Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted." To his disciples he also said, "I will not leave you comfortless." There are many other divine promises, which afford assurance, that God will comfort his people respecting all the evils, troubles and sorrows they ever experience. It is written, "all things work together for good to them that love God." The people of God are often involved in great darkness respecting many evils, which they suffer in this life.—They may imagine that there can be no wise and good reasons for their troubles. But God has the wisest and best reasons for his own conduct in their bitterest afflictions and heaviest sorrows. And he is able and willing to fulfil his promises to his people. They ought, therefore, to be assured, that he will turn their sorrow into joy, and their troubles into comforts. He is faithful to his promises of everlasting consolation to his people.

Again—The conduct of God towards his people, agrees with his promises. They have been obliged to turn to him for light, sup-

port and comfort. And they have always found him a refuge and strength, and a very present help in trouble. In many instances the whole church of God on earth has been surrounded by enemies and dangers, and been brought to the very verge of destruction. But God has protected, relieved, and preserved his kingdom, in the face of earth and hell. Every pious person has frequently been in the midst of trouble; but God has never forgotten, nor forsaken those who have trusted in him. Jacob and Joseph, Job and David, Daniel and Jonah, had severe and painful afflictions and trials; but they were even in this life, abundantly comforted and satisfied in respect to all their sorrows. From their own experience, the people of God have had reason to say—"The Lord will not cast off forever; but though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies; for he doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men." From the perfections, the promises, and the conduct of God, it is certain that his people will have comforts, exceeding abundantly above all their troubles.

Since Christians are subjected to many troubles in this life, they ought not to expect freedom from trouble, while they remain on earth. They are very apt to deceive themselves in respect to their present state. They commonly imagine, they may have fewer and less troubles in future,

than they have had in times that are past, or than they have at present. If they have had many troubles, they hope on that account, they have already suffered their portion of affliction and sorrow. If their present prospects are favorable, and they perceive no way, in which troubles may arise, they are ready to promise themselves they shall have rest. In his prosperity Job said, "I shall die in my nest, and I shall multiply my days as the sand." But how little did he then foresee of what he had to suffer in the future events of divine providence. The Psalmist says, "In my prosperity, I said, I shall never be moved.— Lord, by thy favor thou hast made my mountain to stand strong."— But his mountain soon shook and trembled, and he was thrown into trouble. The experience of pious persons in all ages, the declarations of divine truth, the condition of this world, and the design of their present existence, unite to teach the people of God never to expect freedom from trouble, while they remain on earth. They ought to be assured that they shall experience the accomplishment of the Savior's declaration to his disciples—"In the world ye shall have tribulation."

If the people of God have comforts as well as troubles in this life, then we may easily form a correct opinion of their present state. Incorrect opinions on this subject, very commonly exist. It is sometimes thought that if per-

sons become truly pious, they will have no more trouble and sorrow. But it is also supposed, that pious persons, in this life, are commonly gloomy, afflicted and sorrowful.— In the scriptures, christians are taught to expect enemies and conflicts, temptation and troubles.— But they are required to be always contented and joyful. Christians sometimes speak of great darkness, distress and discouragement. At other times, they speak of their comforts and joys. What, then, is the truth respecting the present state of pious persons? Is it happy or unhappy? Their state on earth is doubtless, strangely mixed with light and darkness, trouble and comfort, sorrow and joy, hope and fear, good and evil, glory and shame. In themselves, they are sinful, guilty, hateful, wretched and ruined creatures.— Nor can this world, nor can all created beings afford any real relief and permanent happiness to their souls. But pious persons turn to God and trust in him. If they look to God, they have light and life, joy and glory. In the state of christians on earth, there are things directly and totally opposite. If they are seen without God for their hope and portion, they have nothing, and are worse than nothing. If they are seen with God, all things are theirs, and their state is safe, happy and glorious. The whole truth respecting their comforts and troubles, respecting God and themselves must be regarded, if we

would form a correct opinion of the present state of real christians.—Though christians have troubles as well as comforts, they have no reason to be disheartened by the evils they experience. Their troubles are so many, so constant, and sometimes so unexpected and unaccountable, that they are liable to sink into distress and discouragement. Sometimes they have refused to be comforted, and have resolved to harden themselves in sorrow. And they may for a time renounce their faith and hope in God. Zion said, "The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me." But God said, "Can a woman forget her suckling child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me." The apostle says to christians, "There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." James says, "My brethren, count it all joy, when ye fall into divers temptations." And Peter says, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial, that is to try you."

Though christians have no reason to be disheartened by their troubles, they ought always to

trust in God for comfort. When they turn to God in trouble, they find support and comfort in him. But they often turn from God in their troubles and seek relief and help from creatures. Yet they find that all creatures are miserable comforters. The children of God should have their hearts always fixed by trusting in him.—Then they would never be greatly moved, but would be exceedingly joyful in all their tribulation. His perfections, his promises and his conduct, are as firm as the everlasting mountains, and more durable than the foundations of the earth.

Though christians may always find comfort in God, yet since they will have troubles as long as they live, their dismissal from this world must be to christians a very joyful event. When removed from this state of sin, shame and sorrow, they will have received all their evil things, and they will be comforted and joyful forever.—The apostle says, "Our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things that are seen, are temporal; but the things that are not seen, are eternal." The pious Psalmist in his troubles and sorrows on earth, could turn to God, and in view of heaven, could say, "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satis-

fied, when I awake with thy likeness.”

ZEBULON.

SERMONS—No. II.

CONSTANT ADVANCEMENT IN RELIGION
THE DUTY OF CHRISTIANS.

PHILLIP. III. 13.—*This one thing I do.*

In the chapter, which contains the text, the apostle describes his religious character before he embraced the gospel. He then declares his sentiments respecting the Lord Jesus Christ and the method of salvation through his death. Though he was conscious of true faith in the Savior and of a good hope through grace, yet he was deeply sensible of his moral imperfection. He says, “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Jesus Christ. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things, which are behind and reaching forth unto those things, which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” Constant advancement in religious attainments was the object of the apostle. And it should be the object of every christian. In respect to this object every christian should be able truly to say, “This one thing I do.” This, then, is the sentiment, which lies before us in the

present discourse; Constant advancement in religion is the duty of every christian.

To illustrate this sentiment it is proposed,

I. To show in what respects christians may advance in religion; and,

II. To show that constant advancement in such respects is the duty of every christian. It is proposed,

I. To show in what respects christians may advance in religion. And it may be observed,

1. That christians may advance in divine knowledge. The Savior said unto his disciples, “it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.” Respecting divine subjects christians have real knowledge; and not merely notions and opinions. This knowledge begins, when God, who commanded the light to shine from darkness, shines in their hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ. This true knowledge of divine things is, at first, very limited and indistinct. But it will constantly increase. For it is written, “The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.” As christians advance in divine knowledge, their views of the same subjects become more accurate and extensive. They also become acquainted with a greater number of subjects. And they more clearly perceive the connections and consequences of

the essential doctrines and duties of the gospel. Divine truth exhibits the perfections, designs and works of God. As these subjects of religious instruction are unbounded, so no limits can be set to the progress of christians in divine knowledge. They may advance in their knowledge of divine truth forever.

2. Christians may advance in holiness. Though every gracious affection in christians be perfectly holy and pure; yet, in this life, they have many affections, that are totally unholy and sinful.—While they are imperfect, their progress in holiness chiefly consists in the increasing constancy of holy affections. In this respect they may greatly advance, though in the present life they never become perfectly holy. The holy affections of christians may also become more enlarged, as well as more constant. As they obtain a more thorough and extensive knowledge of divine things, their hearts are enlarged in the exercise of holy affections. In the constancy and enlargement of their holy affections, christians may advance during the present life.—And in the enlargement of holy affections they may advance forever. Though christians are perfectly holy, when they enter heaven, yet this perfection no more implies that they cannot then advance in holiness, than the perfection of God, of angels and saints implies, that they are equally holy. As perfectly holy beings are

not equal in the degrees of holiness, so the saints, when perfectly holy, may in an important respect, still advance in holiness. As their natural capacity shall be increased by divine knowledge, their moral perfection will be advanced by the enlargement of holy affections.

3. Christians may advance in usefulness. To his disciples the Savior says, “Ye are the salt of the earth. Ye are the light of the world.” By the spirit they possess, the doctrines they maintain, the duties they perform and the blessings they enjoy, they preserve all the real virtue, knowledge, piety and happiness, that exist among mankind. The happy effects of their principles, exertions and prayers spread far and wide, and continue from age to age. In proportion to their knowledge and holiness, christians are prepared and disposed to be useful. If they are feeble and sickly in their spiritual condition, they are rather a burden than a benefit in the church of God. Like babes, they need great and constant attention, kindness and care, while they are unfit for any important service, or useful labor. But growing christians are able to assist in the cause of truth, and are disposed to abound in the work of the Lord. They are a help and not a hindrance to their brethren. Many christians have, in this life, been useful beyond any limits, that we can assign. And every christian may become “like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bring-

eth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doth shall prosper." Nor will the usefulness of christians cease or lessen in the future state. In heaven they will serve God for ever with increasing knowledge and holiness. And by their holy and useful services, they will afford delight to the holy angels, and to their redeemed brethren; to the Lord Jesus Christ, to God the Father, and to the eternal Spirit. As christians may for ever advance in other religious attainments, so they may for ever advance in usefulness.

4. Christians may advance in happiness. Their happiness arises from their communion with the living and true God. His perfections, designs, and works are the sources of their delight and joy. As these sources of their happiness are eternal and unbounded, their enjoyments may not only continue, but increase for ever. John writes to his brethren, "What we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.— And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full." As christians advance in knowledge, holiness and usefulness, their spiritual communion with God increases and they advance in happiness. Nor is there any thing, that can interrupt or lessen their joy. God is pleased with his own infinite perfections, with all his designs

and conduct. The existence of every creature, every action and every event, affords delight to the supreme Being, who has made all things for himself, and works all things after the counsel of his own will. God sees all things in their proper connections and consequences. And though many things exist which are evil and hateful in themselves, yet their existence is, on the whole, wisest and best. As the affections and designs of God respecting all his creatures, and all events are perfect in wisdom and goodness, he rejoices in all his works. And as his people rise above themselves, and above all created beings, and enjoy more intimate and enlarged communion with their heavenly Father, their spiritual happiness increases. Even in this life, they have reason to rejoice always, and to rejoice in all things. And in the future state, as the glory of God will be for ever unfolding with increasing brightness and beauty, in the accomplishment of his eternal purposes, their happiness in the knowledge, love, service and praise of God, will continue and increase for ever. It is proposed,

II. 'To show that constant advancement in religion is the duty of every christian.

The apostle says, "This one thing I do, forgetting the things, that are behind, and reaching forth unto those things that are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God

in Christ Jesus." Though it is probable the apostle had made as great progress in religion, as any christian that ever lived, yet he would not rest in any present attainments. And every christian ought to follow his example.— That constant advancement in religion is the duty of christians may appear from the following considerations.

1. Their imperfection should induce christians to make constant advancement in religious attainments. They are, in all respects, very imperfect. The apostle was deeply sensible of his imperfection, as he declares in our context. And his imperfection had its proper influence upon his conduct. It excited him to be constant and earnest in his exertions to advance towards perfection. And by the same consideration every christian should be excited to conduct in the same manner. Whatever progress christians may have made in religion, they ought to forget the things that are behind. They ought to consider how far they are from the mark they are bound to reach. The apostle blames the Hebrew christians, because they had made no greater progress in divine knowledge. He says, "When for the time, ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again, which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such, as have need of milk and not of strong meat. For every one, that useth

milk, is unskilful in the word of righteousness; for he is a babe." If christians would be but truly sensible of their imperfections, they would perceive, that the one thing, which they ought to desire and pursue, is constant advancement in religious attainments.

2. God requires christians to make constant advancement in religion. He says, by the apostle, unto the church of the Thessalonians, "Furthermore, then, we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus Christ, that as ye have received of us, how ye ought to walk and please God, so ye would abound more and more." Again he says, "as touching brotherly love, ye need not that I write unto you, for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren, who are in all Macedonia; but, we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more." Peter urges his brethren to advance in the divine life. He says, "giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you and abound, they make you, that ye shall neither be idle nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." Again he says, "Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." These

divine requirements urge and bind christians, whatever progress they may have made, constantly to advance in religion.

3. God has appointed the best means to promote the religious advancement of christians. To the saints at Ephesus, it is written, "He gave some apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints; for the work of the ministry; for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come, in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; that we henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, who is the head, even Christ." Here we are taught, that the great object, for which God appoints the religious instructions and privileges, which christians enjoy, is their progress in religious attainments. For this purpose they have the holy scriptures. For this purpose they have the ministry of the gospel. For this purpose they have divine ordinances. For this purpose they are separated from the world by a public profession of religion. ¶ And for this purpose they are subjected to the discipline, which the Lord Jesus Christ

requires his churches to maintain in his name. Now, since God appoints such means to promote the religious advancement of christians, they ought to unite with him in this important design, and not receive his grace in vain.

4. To obtain the great object of their profession, it is necessary for christians to advance in religion. The knowledge, the service and enjoyment of the living and true God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the present life and in the future existence, are what persons profess to desire and pursue, when they profess and bear the name of christians. To gain the great object of their profession, they must renounce every contrary interest and pursuit. In our context, the apostle says, "Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ."—The blessedness and glory, which the apostle sought, he calls "the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." To gain this prize, he constantly labored to advance in religious attainments.—Without such advancement, he knew he could not be prepared to be with Christ in heaven. And no christian can enter heaven, until he is completely formed into a vessel of mercy, and fitted for the pure and perfect society of those blessed mansions. Neither the profession, nor the privileges, nor

the experiences, nor the sacrifices, nor the services, nor the enjoyments of christians will avail any thing towards their admission into heaven, unless they become perfect and entire, wanting nothing. Unless they advance in religion, until they are perfectly holy, they never can gain the great object, for which they profess to renounce the world, the flesh and Satan.— They must, therefore, constantly advance in religion, in order to gain the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

IMPROVEMENT.

1. In view of the attainments, in which christians may forever advance, it is evident that the church must afford the Lord Jesus Christ a high degree of delight. The growth of any object in what is valuable and beautiful is pleasant. The growth of children is interesting and delightful. It is pleasant to trace the commencement and progress of communities, whether civil or religious. The rise and growth of states, kingdoms and nations, and their advancement in literature, policy, science, arts and wealth, have always excited a high degree of attention and interest. But these objects, though for a time, they advance and flourish, are never perfect. They soon decline and perish. But christians grow in such respects, as are most important and beautiful. And their growth continues and increases, until they arrive to perfection.—

Such is the growth of a christian. But consider the growth of the whole church. The church may be seen in its commencement and progress on earth. It has been maintained and enlarged through successive ages, notwithstanding its own weakness and the number and power of its enemies. At a future day it will be prosperous and triumphant among all nations. At the final judgment, the millions and millions of redeemed sinners, will be raised to the perfection of heavenly blessedness and beauty. Yet, then, they will for ever advance in knowledge, holiness, usefulness and happiness. All this life, growth and glory, the church receives from the Lord Jesus Christ. In him was formed the eternal purpose of redemption.— He begins and finishes this purpose. He creates, preserves and governs all things in reference to his spiritual kingdom. For this object he came into the world, became a man of sorrows and died on the cross. But he is now “head over all things unto the church, which is his body; the fulness of him, that filleth all in all.” The redemption, advancement and glory of the church will for ever exercise and gratify his benevolent affections. He says, that from eternity his “delights were with the sons of men.” It is written “for the joy set before him, he endured the cross.” It is also written, “He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied.” The eternal and increasing excellence

and glory of his redeemed people will for ever afford the Lord Jesus Christ the highest enjoyment and satisfaction.

2. From what has been said in the present discourse, it is evident, that no christian can ever have any reason to think highly of his religious attainments. Mankind are, by nature, disposed to think themselves something when they are nothing. And real christians have strong and violent conflicts with a proud and selfish spirit.— They are liable to think more highly of themselves than they ought to think. They are apt to think highly of their religious opinions, affections, services and enjoyments. But they have no reason to think highly of their spiritual attainments. They ought not to think that they have already attained; or that they are already perfect. Compared with what some christians have attained in this life, most christians have made but little progress in religion. And their progress appears still less, when it is compared with what all christians ought to be.— But the highest attainments of such christians, as have made the greatest progress in religion, are not worthy to be compared with the future attainments of such christians, as are now mere babes in Christ. But even with an eternal progression in excellence, christians must for ever be nothing and less than nothing in the presence of the supreme Being. Christians,

then, should never think highly of themselves, or of their religious attainments. It becomes every christian to sink into his proper place, and to impress very deeply upon his own heart the sentiment of the apostle, who says, “I am nothing.”

3. Since christians should constantly advance in religion, they never should make of themselves a standard in respect to religion. If they imagine themselves to be a standard in religion, they act as if they had already attained, and were already perfect. By such unwise conduct they prevent their progress in religion. To the saints at Corinth, the apostle writes, “We dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.” It is unwise for a person to measure himself by himself. And it is more unwise for a person to measure other persons by himself. Yet many professors of religion are so unwise, that they will admit of nothing but what agrees with themselves. But it is extremely unwise and dangerous for a person to try and admit or reject things by himself, as if he were a standard in religion. Every person ought to try himself by the perfect standard of moral rectitude. And every christian ought constantly to advance beyond his present attainments. Nor ought

any christian ever to rest in himself, as a standard in respect to religion.

4. Since constant advancement in religion is the duty of christians, they should be careful to be thoroughly acquainted with their own imperfections. If they do not see in what respects they are imperfect and defective, they will not see what is to be reformed and amended in themselves. Christians, then, should be careful to obtain a thorough and intimate acquaintance with themselves, in order to advance in religious attainments. Every christian ought to be very particular in his attention to his failings and blemishes. A christian may think favorably of himself, because he avoids some errors and sins, while he does not avoid other errors and sins that are equally hateful and pernicious. Some real christians are peculiarly liable to err in one respect; while other real christians are peculiarly liable to err in other respects. Besides their common imperfection and depravity, there are particular blemishes in every christian. These blemishes every christian must be exceedingly careful and watchful to discover in himself and remove, if he would advance in religion. Christians should constantly and impartially strive for an accurate and increasing knowledge of their imperfections, that they may remove from themselves every spot and wrinkle and every such thing; and that they may be holy and without blemish.

5. From the present subject, we may perceive a striking difference between true and false professors of religion. This difference respects advancement in religion. As advancement in religion, is the constant duty, so it is the constant object of real christians. But false professors do not advance in the christian course. They are not truly alive unto God. Nor do they walk in the path of life. How can they, while dead in sin, advance in spiritual attainments? It is certain, that a person, who is not a true christian, never grows in religion. False converts are content with a false hope. They think themselves something, when they are nothing, and so they deceive themselves. They may have a high opinion of their religious character and condition. They may imagine they are eminent for knowledge, piety and usefulness, while they are totally destitute of every christian attainment and exceedingly offensive and loathsome in the church of God. It is evident, that they are not christians, whatever they may think and profess, and whatever they appear to be, because they make no progress in real religion. Without life they cannot grow. Though they may at first appear well, they never appear better. The more they are known, the worse they appear. As they show no growth, they show that they have no life. But the real and living christian grows. And by his growth he shows that he is alive. In respect

to growth in the divine life, there will always be a striking difference between true and false professors of religion.

6. Since constant advancement in religion is the duty of every christian, we may see one object, which christians should always regard, when they examine themselves. They should be careful to inquire and see, whether they make any progress in religion.— They should not be satisfied, merely with evidence that they are christians. They should have decisive evidence that they have advanced, and do advance, in religious attainments. And they should seek for evidence of such advancement, when they examine themselves. They should inquire whether they advance in knowledge, holiness, usefulness and happiness. Though christians may be sensible, that they have been very indolent and inconstant in their course, yet every true christian does grow in the divine life.— Though they have a humble opinion of their present attainments, yet they may see that they have advanced in religion. If christians will carefully and impartially examine themselves, they may see, that they have advanced in divine knowledge. And the evidence of such advancement they may discover in an increasing conviction of their own ignorance. They may discover evidence of their advancement in holiness, by a more

keen and tender sense of their own sin, guilt and shame, of their constant and entire dependance upon the mercy of God for every blessing, and upon his holy and sovereign influence for every gracious affection. They may discover evidence of their advancement in usefulness, from a more watchful and ardent desire to serve and please God, and to embrace every opportunity to promote his kingdom on earth, whatever they may suffer for his name's sake. And they may discover evidence of advancement in happiness, from a spirit of increasing submission, contentment, gratitude and patience, under the trying and humbling allotments of divine providence.— As christians do advance in religious attainments, they are bound to see, with self-abasement, the truth, the power, the mercy, the faithfulness and the sovereignty of God in their advancement. When they find, that they have evidence of progress in religion and are excited by such evidence to praise God for his grace, and still to advance in religion, then their conduct is right; their condition is happy; and their prospects are pleasant and glorious. But there is nothing right in real christians, unless they advance in knowledge, holiness, usefulness and happiness. Let every christian, then, be able truly to say, in respect to advancement in religion, "*This one thing I do*"

THE GOSPEL ITS OWN WITNESS TO THOSE
WHO EMBRACE IT.

No. I.

INTRODUCTION.

There is reason to believe, that there has never been, since the world began, a time, in which a greater variety of religious denominations, and a greater diversity of religious opinions existed, under a profession of the gospel, than do exist at the present day. To say nothing of the Grecian and Romish churches, there are in the Protestant countries many that say, I am of Luther; I am of Calvin; I am of Arminius; I am of Socinus; I am of Barclay; I am of Swedenborg; I am of Priestley; I am of Wesley; I am of Relley. If we attend to the variety of denominations, and the diversity of opinions, which exist among religious professors, in these United States, especially in New-England, and almost in every town and parish, we might be induced to imagine that we were in the land of Shinar, and not far from "the city and the tower, which the children of men builded." All these builders and babblers are equally zealous and active, noisy and bold. The professors of every sect, of every name, and every notion, appear to be equally confident, that the top of their city and tower will reach unto heaven. They profess to believe the gospel of the grace of God; they profess to be the disciples of the Lord Jésus Christ; and they profess to re-

ceive the holy scriptures for the foundation of their faith and practice. But if the opinions and practices of the various professors of the gospel are founded on the scriptures, the scriptures are inconsistent and contradictory. Shall we, then, renounce the scriptures, on account of the variety of denominations, and the diversity of opinions, which exist among religious professors?—At a certain time, when the Lord Jesus Christ was on earth, many of his professed disciples, on account of his doctrines, "went back and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure, that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." The apostles were satisfied, that Christ was the promised Messiah; that his doctrines were true; and that they who embraced his doctrines, would be conducted to eternal happiness. And they were convinced and assured, that there was no medium between embracing the gospel, which Christ taught, and despairing of salvation. Such a conviction and assurance were not peculiar to the apostles, but common to all persons, who truly embrace the gospel.—*For they, who truly embrace the gospel, are assured that there is no other way of salvation.*

This sentiment, which is now introduced to the attention and

consideration of the readers of the *Christian Magazine*, it is proposed to illustrate in the following numbers of this communication.

No. II.

AN EXPLANATION OF THE GOSPEL.

By the gospel is meant the scheme of grace, which God has revealed in the scriptures for the salvation of sinners through the death of Jesus Christ. That the gospel is a scheme of grace is abundantly evident from the whole system of divine truth, as well as from particular declarations in the scriptures. In the midst of dangers and afflictions, the apostle says, "None of these things move me, neither do I count my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." To the saints at Ephesus, he says, once and again, "By grace ye are saved." And of himself, he says, "By the grace of God I am what I am." Now grace consists in the exercise and expression of goodness in favor of sinful and guilty creatures. The gospel is a scheme of grace, as it is the plan, which God has formed in his wisdom and goodness for the salvation of sinners, who are as guilty as they are sinful, and deserve his wrath and curse forever. Since all mankind are sinful and guilty creatures, God could not, consistently with his goodness, save human beings from the pains of endless

death, without such a propitiation, as should manifest and exalt his justice, as well as his grace in their salvation.

That God might be just in their salvation, he has given his Son to die on the cross for sinners. But without such a sacrifice to his justice and such an atonement for sin, as God has made by the death of the Lord Jesus Christ upon the cross, he could not have saved a single person from the curse of the law. The doctrine of atonement through the death of Christ upon the cross is, therefore, a fundamental and essential doctrine of the gospel.—For without this atonement no human being could have been saved from endless punishment.

But the atonement of Jesus Christ and the offer of life through his death do not secure the salvation of a single person. For sinners hate Christ with perfect hatred and despise the offer of life through his death. Therefore God has, in the scheme of divine grace for the salvation of sinners, made provision for their sanctification, as well as for their justification. According to the gospel, the Holy spirit, by his special and powerful influence, causes sinners to repent and turn to God through Jesus Christ, and to believe and obey his holy requirements. But without this divine influence every human being, in full view of heaven and hell, and of the death of Christ upon the cross, and of the offer of salvation through his blood, would reject the counsel of God

against himself and perish forever. The doctrine of sanctification through the special influence of the Holy Spirit is therefore a fundamental and essential doctrine of the gospel. For without this influence no human being would ever accept salvation from endless punishment.

Again.—There is no reason to suppose, that God would have laid a foundation for the forgiveness of sinners, or have made any provision for their sanctification, if he had not formed the purpose of redemption and determined what number and what persons he would save. Without such a divine purpose, it is certain that no human being ever would be saved from sin and death. But according to the gospel, God gave his Son such a number of the human family, as he thought wisest and best to save, in the eternal counsel of his own will. To this counsel is to be traced the mediation and atonement of Jesus Christ, the repentance and sanctification of sinners by the Holy Spirit and the salvation of every person, who is saved from sin and woe in hell and raised to the holiness and happiness of heaven. The doctrine of eternal, personal election is, therefore, a fundamental and essential doctrine of the gospel.—For without the purpose of God to save the elect, there would have been no atonement by the death of Christ, nor any sanctification by the Holy Spirit, nor any salvation

for any human being from eternal punishment.

The doctrines of election, atonement and sanctification are not only fundamental and essential doctrines of the gospel, but they are peculiar and the only peculiar doctrines of the gospel, in the strictest sense. All the other doctrines of natural and revealed religion might have been true, but these doctrines could not have been true, without the gospel of salvation. God might have existed forever ; and he might have existed forever in the trinity of persons and the unity of his essence ; he might have decreed and caused all things ; and he might have caused sinful and guilty creatures to exist and perish forever, without the great purpose of redemption. But with this purpose, God cannot save sinners without an atonement ; nor with an atonement, can he save sinners without their sanctification. Yet both the atonement by the death of Christ, and the sanctification of sinners by the Holy Spirit, originate from the eternal purpose of the Father to redeem his chosen people. To this purpose must be ascribed the salvation of sinners. If this purpose be obscured, or denied, the origin and foundation, the essence and glory of the gospel are obscured and denied ; and nothing of God is truly seen in the gospel of his grace. If then we explain the gospel, according to its fundamental, essential and peculiar doc-

trines, it is the eternal purpose of God to save the elect from endless punishment, through the atone-

ment of Jesus Christ, by the sanctification of the Holy Spirit.

JOHN.

EXTRACTS.

THE RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE OF PRESIDENT EDWARDS.

I had a variety of concerns and exercises about my soul from my childhood; but had two more remarkable seasons of awakening before I met with that change by which I was brought to those new dispositions, and that sense of things that I have since had. The first time was when I was a boy, some years before I went to college, at a time of remarkable awakening in my father's congregation. I was then very much affected for many months, and concerned about the things of religion, and my soul's salvation; and was abundant in duties. I used to pray five times a day in secret, and to spend much time in religious talk with other boys, and used to meet with them to pray together. I experienced I know not what kind of delight in religion. My mind was much engaged in it, and had much self-righteous pleasure, and it was my delight to abound in religious duties. I, with some of my school-mates joined together, and built a booth in a swamp, in a very secret and retired place, for a place of prayer. And besides, I had particular secret places of my own in the woods,

where I used to retire by myself; and used to be from time to time much affected. My affections seemed to be lively and easily moved, and I seemed to be in my element when I engaged in religious duties. And I am ready to think, many are deceived with such affections, and such a kind of delight, as I then had in religion, and mistake it for grace.

But, in process of time, my convictions and affections wore off, and I entirely lost all those affections and delights, and left off secret prayer, at least as to any constant performance of it, and returned like a dog to his vomit, and went on in ways of sin.

Indeed I was at sometimes very uneasy, especially towards the latter part of the time of my being at college, till it pleased God, in my last year at college, at a time when I was in the midst of many uneasy thoughts about the state of my soul, to seize me with a pleurisy; in which he brought me nigh to the grave, and shook me over the pit of hell.

But yet it was not long after my recovery, before I fell again into my old ways of sin. But God

would not suffer me to go on with any quietness, but I had great and violent inward struggles; until after many conflicts with wicked inclinations, and repeated resolutions, and bonds that I laid myself under by a kind of vows to God, I was brought wholly to break off all former wicked ways, and all ways of known outward sin, and to apply myself to seek my salvation, and practice the duties of religion; but without that kind of affection and delight that I had formerly experienced. My concern now wrought more by inward struggles and conflicts, and self-reflections. I made seeking my salvation the main business of my life. But yet it seems to me, I sought after a miserable manner, which has made me sometimes since to question, whether ever it issued in that which was saving; being ready to doubt, whether such miserable seeking was ever succeeded. But yet I was brought to seek salvation in a manner that I never was before. I felt a spirit to part with all things in the world for an interest in Christ.—My concern continued and prevailed, with many exercising thoughts and inward struggles; but yet it never seemed to be proper to express my concern that I had by the name of terror.

From my childhood up, my mind had been wont to be full of objections against the doctrine of God's sovereignty, in choosing whom he would to eternal life, and rejecting whom he pleased, leaving

them eternally to perish, and be everlastingly tormented in hell.—It used to appear like a horrible doctrine to me. But I remember the time very well, when I seemed to be convinced, and fully satisfied, as to the sovereignty of God, and his justice in thus eternally disposing of men, according to his sovereign pleasure. But never could give an account, how, or by what means, I was thus convinced; not in the least imagining, in the time of it, nor a long time after, that there was any extraordinary influence of God's Spirit in it; but only that now I saw further, and my reason apprehended the justice and reasonableness of it. However, my mind rested in it, and it put an end to all those cavils and objections that had till then abode with me all the preceding part of my life. And there has been a wonderful alteration in my mind, with respect to the doctrine of God's sovereignty, from that day to this, so that I scarce ever have found so much as the rising of an objection against God's sovereignty, in the most absolute sense, in showing mercy to whom he will show mercy, and hardening and eternally damning whom he will. God's absolute sovereignty and justice, with respect to salvation and damnation, is what my mind seems to rest assured of, as much as of any thing that I see with my eyes; at least it is so at times. But I have oftentimes since that first conviction, had quite another kind of sense of

God's sovereignty than I had then. I have often since, not only had a conviction, but a *delightful* conviction. The doctrine of God's sovereignty has very often appeared an exceeding pleasant, bright, and sweet doctrine to me : and absolute sovereignty is what I love to ascribe to God.



A RELATION OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE.

During the uncommon attention to religion in —, I was led by the examples of other persons, to attend the meetings ; but I do not remember that my mind was particularly affected by religious subjects. After that time my mind was sometimes a little impressed about my unhappy and dangerous condition, as I had no reason to suppose I was in a state of friendship and favor with God.— In the month of last January, by means of a sermon on these words, “ Repent, therefore, of this thy wickedness and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee ; for I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity,” my mind was really awakened about my conduct and state. I saw and felt that I was in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity. I felt that I was condemned by the law of God, and that he was greatly and justly angry with me for my sinful conduct. I was led to attend to my own heart and I found that my heart

was nothing but sin and wholly opposed to God and his law. I began to read the Bible with concern, but it gave me no comfort nor relief. I attempted to pray, but I felt that God would not hear me, because I was praying with a sinful heart, and my attempts to pray were wholly selfish. Religious instruction gave me no relief. It was wholly against me and increased my distress. In reading Baxter's call to the unconverted, I found something to this purpose. Ministers are willing to have persons go to them about their religious concerns, but sinners are not willing to go for instruction. On this I thought I would go to our minister. I found that he was willing and ready to converse with me.— He appeared to understand the state of my mind and to be interested for my salvation. But his instructions and prayers gave me no relief. They produced a greater conviction of my wickedness and misery and increased my distress. When he prayed that God would have mercy on me for his own sake, my heart rose against the petition. I had no desire that God would save me for his sake. All my desire was that he would save me for my own sake. Hence I was led to see, that I was wholly selfish and sinful in all my distress about myself. Though I knew I was wholly sinful in my prayers, yet I was displeased with God because he would not hear me, while I regarded iniquity in my heart. The dealings of God with

me seemed hard and I wished that there was no God to deal with me. My whole heart rose against him. I wished I had never been born. I would gladly have exchanged situations with the meanest brute. I felt condemned for my abuse of religious privileges, and felt that it would have been better for me if I had been a heathen. I was convinced that I ought to submit to God, but I supposed if I did, he would certainly condemn me and not save me. I thought that if I knew he would save me, I would submit to him at any time. But I could not bear to submit to him, while I was under the curse of his law and subject to his dreadful wrath. Such were my views and feelings, until, as I believe, in the month of April I saw and felt, that God would be holy, just and good in my condemnation and destruction. In view of his character I felt willing to be in his hands without knowing what he would do with me.—My mind was turned from myself. In view of God I was relieved, and was pleased and rejoiced, that he would be glorified whatever might become of me. I saw and knew that he is good in the destruction as well as in the salvation of sinners. My prayer then was, that God would save me for his own sake. I felt ashamed of my conduct in being so much concerned about myself while I had no regard to the glory of God.—In view of God I saw my own villainess and abhorred myself. I had

yet no hope that I should be saved; nor any thought that I had experienced a saving change. I appeared more sinful and hateful to myself than ever I did before. My mind was turned about this time to Jesus Christ and to the way of salvation through him.—He appeared altogether lovely and glorious in his person, in his conduct, and in his death for sinners. My heart seemed turned to him with supreme love, though he should never save me. My mind was so turned from myself, that I had little concern or thought whether I had become a christian and should be saved. By religious conversation I was led to think more about the change in my views and feelings; and for a number of months I have had a little hope, that I may have passed from death unto life. Religious instruction has been comforting and pleasing to me. I was particularly pleased with a sermon on these words, “My counsel shall stand and I will do all my pleasure.” The sovereign purpose and pleasure of God seem to be the support and joy of my heart. I am sensible, that I ought to live wholly to God and not to myself. For some time I have thought of making a public profession of religion. And it now appears to be my duty to offer myself before God and this assembly to his service and to the fellowship of his church and people. I cannot make this public and solemn offer of myself to God with-

out fear and trembling for my future conduct in this sinful, changing and trying world, and with an heart that is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. I do therefore request the prayers of real christians to God for me. My life, at longest, must be short. In view of life and death and all things, it is, if I do not deceive myself, my comfort and joy that God in all things will be glorified.



A GOOD STYLE.

Our English translation of the Bible is simple in its language, and wholly free from affectation. The words that are used, are pure English; and there is not a phrase, which swells into bombast. The most sublime sentiments are expressed with perfect simplicity. Let a single instance be selected from hundreds, which might be mentioned. Were an inferior, pedantic writer to have represented the grand idea of God's creating light, after laboring and swelling, like the frog in the fable, he might, perhaps, have expressed it in the following manner:—"Deity gave command, that light, the fair first-born of nature, should spring into existence; and by his almighty fiat, light instantly ushered forth from the womb of eternal darkness and illuminated the opaque terrestrial ball with its glorious effulgence." But in the Bible the idea is expressed with

perfect ease.—"God said, let there be light, and there was light."

Real sublimity consists in noble thoughts, and not in the use of great words. When a writer or speaker is thought to be sublime, because he abounds in words and phrases, that are uncommon and labored, it is as ridiculous an absurdity as for a boy, who walks on stilts, to think himself taller than a man. Any polish of style, or arrangement of periods, which obscures the sense, is a real blemish in composition; though some half-learned persons may admire it as a beauty. We read or hear, not for the sound of words, but for instruction and knowledge. Hence, that is the best style, which conveys thoughts in the fewest words, and with the greatest plainness. The language of the scriptures, in our common translation, is concise and clear. It is the perfection of style to speak or write in such a manner, that the thoughts and not the words engage and fix our attention. When we read the Bible, while the thoughts strike our minds, we scarcely notice the words. But a bad style turns the attention to itself and not to the sentiment. Every attempt to embellish correct and noble thoughts by florid language, debases and obscures the subject. As well might one attempt to varnish the colors of the rainbow, as to adorn sublime sentiments by fine words.

The language of the Bible is an

excellent model for youth. Affected language is as disgusting as affected manners and dress. "For language is the dress of thought." Now youth, who are ambitious to excel, are apt, through a desire to distinguish themselves, to assume an affected language; or to make their style glitter with ornaments. Their style ought, therefore, to be formed at first upon a model of perfect and beautiful simplicity.

The tracts of Dr. Franklin have been read with eagerness and delight, for the simplicity of his language, as well as for his good sense. And how artless are the writings of Washington, whose manly thoughts are expressed in words, which children may understand. It is sufficient only to mention, that Addison and Swift, who have obtained the established reputation and distinction of *English Classics*, were remarkable for the easy and beautiful simplicity of their language. When youth are accustomed to a simple style, it will be easy to use judicious embellishments on proper occasions. But if they form a habit of affectation in language, it will be hard to cure it.

The style of the Bible is, especially, a complete model of pulpit language. This will be instantly allowed by competent judges in respect to prayer: and it would be easy to show that preaching loses a degree of its force, whenever the preacher departs from the style of the sacred scriptures.

When you hear it said of a preacher, "He uses a pretty, or a grand style," you may fear that his sermon has done little good. It may have pleased the fancy; but it has not awakened the conscience. The truths of the gospel are solemn and weighty. They admit of no decorations. To load divine truth with ornaments, is to obscure its beauty and blunt its force. The spirit and weight of divine truth can be conveyed only in the style of the Bible, which is both simple and pungent. The preacher, who uses the style of the Bible, will be easily understood by every hearer. Nor will the hearers even think of his words; they will see his thoughts.

There are two sorts of eloquence; though one scarcely deserves the name. It consists chiefly in labored and polished periods, curious and artificial arrangement of figures, tinselled with gaudy embellishments; but it conveys little light to the mind. This kind of eloquence is affected and admired by persons of a weak judgment and vicious taste, who have no richness nor vigor of sentiment. It is a vain and foolish eloquence, and has ever been esteemed below great and real geniuses. The other sort of eloquence is directly opposite. It is the natural expression of clear and correct sentiments in pure and simple language. The subject always guides and governs the language of the person, who is truly eloquent.—His words express his thoughts.—

And his thoughts arise in the order and beauty, in the majesty and simplicity of truth.

PLAN OF THE JEWISH SETTLEMENT.

We are gratified to learn from the number of Israel's Advocate for February, that the Directors of the American Society for meliorating the condition of the Jews have come to a decision as to the plan of their future operations — It appears that the project, originally contemplated, of an extensive colony in the interior of the state of New-York, has been abandoned, as too expensive, and the views of the Directors are now limited to the purchase of a tract of land of 5 or 6,000 acres, as the site of the intended Jewish settlement. The purchase has not yet been made, but it has been ascertained that land in abundance of a good quality, and well suited for the purpose, can be obtained; and from the intelligence and caution of the committee appointed by the Directors to make the selection, it cannot be doubted that the purchase will be a judicious one. Until the land is procured, such Jews as may from time to time come to this country, are to be provided with accommodations at some place in the neighborhood of this city, where they are to reside as *one family*, at the expense of the society.

The following is the plan of the contemplated settlement as reported by the committee.

PLAN.

I. The object of the society is, to invite and receive, from any part of the world, such Jews as do already profess the Christian religion, or are desirous to receive Christian instruction, to form them into a settlement, and to furnish them with the ordinances of the gospel, and with such employment in the settlement as shall be assigned them.

II. The Jews who come to the settlement are to be *principally* employed in agricultural and mechanical operations.

III. In order to facilitate this object, the Board shall procure as much land as will afford a site for the necessary buildings, and the contemplated mechanical and agricultural operations.

IV. In order to afford the emigrants suitable religious instruction, a minister of the gospel shall be procured by the Board, whose duty it shall be to act as the general superintendent of the settlement.

V. A schoolmaster shall be provided, to teach the children and youth such branches of the different sciences as may fit them for becoming intelligent, respectable, and useful members of society.

VI. Theological instruction shall be provided in the settlement for such youth of piety and talent among the Jewish converts, as it may be deemed expedient to have qualified for becoming ministers of the gospel or missionaries.

VII. On the contemplated settlement, a farm shall be stocked, and furnished with suitable implements of husbandry. The produce of the farm shall be considered common stock for the support of the different members of the settlement; and an experienced farmer shall be placed thereon to manage its concerns.

VIII. All the members of the settlement are to be considered as a band of brethren, governed by the laws of our divine Redeemer, and associated together for the purpose of aiding each other in the concerns of the life that now is, and of that which is to come; and if any of the emigrants should act inconsistently with their profession, the Board reserve to themselves the right, at any time, to remove them; lest by their improper conduct they should corrupt the morals of the other members of the settlement.

The committee have not entered into the details of the internal regulations of the settlement.—Many of these must necessarily be left to circumstances and experience. They have contented themselves with submitting a general plan, which may form the basis of future operation, and which may be expanded and improved, as the necessities of our Jewish brethren may require, and the means of the society will admit.

A copy of this plan is to be sent to Count Von der Reeke with a request that he would act as the agent of the Board in making it

known in Germany, in ascertaining the names, numbers, and circumstances of Jews who may wish to come to the settlement, in forming societies to defray their expences, and generally, in calling the attention of the religious public in Germany to the objects of the society.

As land suited for the purposes of the intended settlement cannot be procured for less than 4 or 5 dollars an acre, and as the purchase of 5,000 acres is contemplated, several thousand dollars will be required to enable the Board to commence their operations free from embarrassment.—The friends of the Society will, therefore, perceive the necessity for continuing and increasing their efforts.—*New-York Observer.*

ANECDOTE.

A pious Divine had prayed earnestly many years that God would be pleased to send him a man to teach him the perfect way of truth. One morning, he was told in a dream to go to the church, where he would find an instructor in the way of truth. When he came to the church door, he found a man in rags, to whom he wished a good morning. "I never had a bad morning," replied the poor man. "That is singular; I wish you always fortunate." "I was never unfortunate," said he. "I wish you always happy," said the divine. "I was never unhappy,"

said the other. "I wish," said the divine, "you would explain your meaning. "That I will cheerfully do," replied the poor man. "I said that I never had a bad morning; for every morning, if I am pinched with hunger, I praise God. If it is rain, or snow, or hail, whether the day is serene or tempestuous, I praise God, and therefore I never have a joyless morning. If I am miserable in outward circumstances, and despised, I still praise God. You wished me to be fortunate; but I cannot be unfortunate, because nothing befalls me but according to the will of God; and I believe his will is always good in what he does, or promises to be done. You wished me always happy; but I cannot be unhappy, because my will is always resigned to the will of God." "But what would you say, if God should thrust you down to hell?" "I have two arms, humility and love, with which I would hold fast my incarnate God and Savior, and not let him go; and I would rather be in hell with God, than in heaven without him."

The divine, astonished at the poor man's answers, asked him whence he came. "I came from God." "Where did you find him?" "Where I left the world."—"Where did you leave him?"—"With the pure in heart," "What are you?" "I am a king." "Where is your kingdom?" "In my own heart. I have learned to rule my appetites and passions, and that is better than to govern any king-

dom in the world." "How were you brought into this happy condition?" "By silence, spiritual meditation, and union with God. Nothing below God could satisfy my desires. I have now found him, and in him I have found peace and rest."

ORDINATION.

The Rev. JAMES O. BARNEY was on the 4th inst. ordained over the Congregational Church and Society in Seekonk, Mass. The Introductory Prayer by the Rev. Mr. Fisk, of Wrentham; the Sermon by the Rev. Dr. Park, of Brown University, from Psalm CII. 16. *When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory.* The Consecrating Prayer by the Rev. Mr. Clark, of Norton; the Charge by the Rev. Mr. Wilson, of Providence; the Righthand of Fellowship by the Rev. Mr. Wood, of Barrington; and the Concluding Prayer by the Rev. Mr. Ide, of Medway.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Eubulus is under consideration.

Luther has much merit; but is not written with sufficient accuracy.

The Conclusion of a New-Year's Sermon, is received—and could it retain that importance and beauty, which it received from the character of the preacher, when delivered, it should be inserted in our pages.

Experiens is received, but in the present state of our work, we think it best to defer its insertion.

No communication, whatever be its merits, can be inserted unless it be written with sufficient accuracy to go to the press without being transcribed.

It cannot be expected, that communications which are not legible should be printed.

THE CHRISTIAN MAGAZINE.

VOL. I.

MARCH, 1824.

No. 3.

ORIGINAL COMMUNICATIONS.

THE INFLUENCE OF TRUE RELIGION.

Every religion, whether true or false, will have a powerful influence upon the character and conduct of those, who embrace it.—Different nations are no less distinguished by their religions than by their climates, complexions, and governments. The religion of the grand Lama gives a peculiar character to his worshippers, who comprise the greater part of the Pagan world. The religion of Mahomet gives a peculiar character to his votaries, who claim to be a third part of mankind. And every other false religion forms the peculiar character of all, who embrace it. Let any false religion spread among different and distant nations, and they will receive from it one general character.—Popery has formed the character of the inhabitants in every country, where it has obtained a permanent establishment. And the same effect has been produced by the true religion. Christianity has formed the peculiar character of every people, who have received

it. There is a general resemblance among christians in every quarter of the earth. The true christian religion has, indeed, a more powerful influence, than any other religion, in forming the minds and manners of any people, who embrace it. There are two senses, in which a people may be said to embrace the true religion. One is, when they understandingly receive it as the true religion; and the other is, when they cordially receive its instructions and institutions. But whether a people admit christianity in the former or latter sense, it will have a powerful influence upon their principles, character and conduct. Every christian nation now feels the importance and obligation of the true religion; and should it spread among all nations, it would change the face of things, and give a new complexion to the moral world. To illustrate this subject, it may be observed,

1. That the true religion, which the Bible teaches, has a happy and powerful tendency to enlighten, strengthen and enlarge the

minds of every people, who embrace it. This truth Moses suggested to the people of Israel, when he gave them the sacred oracles. He said, "Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the Lord my God commanded me, that ye should do so, in the land whither ye go to possess it. Keep, therefore, and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, who shall hear all these statutes and say, surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people." The human mind may be either obstructed or assisted in its growth. The greatness or smallness of the understanding, very much depends upon the greatness or smallness of the objects, with which it is familiar and conversant. So long as a child attends only to little and trifling objects, his mind will be weak and small. And should no other objects be placed before his mind, though he should live to old age, he would live and die a child in understanding. But when a child is allowed and induced to contemplate greater and greater objects, as he advances in years, he will increase in knowledge as he increases in stature; and at the common period of manhood he will possess a vigorous and enlarged mind. Let a man be placed in one public station after another, and his understanding will be strengthened and enlarged, as new and greater objects open to his view. If a man be placed at the

head of an army, or at the head of a nation, his views will enlarge, and his mind will strengthen in proportion to the height of the eminence on which he stands, and the greatness of the objects which he beholds. Great objects form great minds. Religious objects, as well as any other objects, serve to weaken or strengthen, to contract or enlarge the human mind. And it is upon this principle, that the true religion must have the greatest tendency to strengthen and enlarge the minds of any people, who embrace it. The object of worship, which the Bible exhibits, is infinitely superior to any object of worship in the Pagan world. The divinities of the heathen are feeble, imperfect, dependant and ignorant beings.— Their knowledge, power and presence are confined to narrow limits. The heathen have no clear and just views of the only living and true God, whose presence fills all places, whose eye sees all things, and whose hand preserves and governs the universe. Such a self-existent and independent Being, who possesses every natural and moral perfection, is the God, whom the Bible teaches mankind to worship. The very idea of such a Being enlightens and enlarges the mind, which contemplates it. And the knowledge of this Being the true religion impresses upon the understandings of every people, who embrace it. They live and grow under the habitual belief of a Being, who

made them, who carries them in his hand, who surrounds them by his presence, and who constantly looks on their hearts. The knowledge and belief of this great, holy and glorious object, directly tends to awaken, strengthen and enlarge their mental powers, and to habituate their minds to the contemplation of other important and interesting objects, which are connected with the existence and perfections of the supreme Being.

The Bible also enlightens a people in the knowledge of themselves, and gives them some just views of the nature, dignity, duration and importance of their own existence. It represents men as rational and immortal creatures, who are formed to exist through all the ages of time and the boundless ages of eternity. This great and noble idea impressed upon the minds of a people, must make themselves and all other nations appear worthy of the deepest attention and respect; and they must be convinced, that with the existence and interests of such beings, they cannot safely trifle. The immortality of the human soul seems to level all distinctions among mankind, and to set the child, the servant, the subject and the beggar upon an equality with the richest and greatest of their fellow-creatures. How differently from this view must the atheist and the Pagan consider himself, and the rest of mankind! He knows not but death will be an eternal sleep and put a final peri-

od to his own existence, and to the existence of every other human being. And while he views himself and his fellow-creatures as such transient and worthless beings, his mind must sink into darkness and despondence. But christianity opens to every human being, the boundless prospects of eternity, which must enlighten and enlarge the minds of those, who embrace it.

Besides—the gospel not only reveals a future and eternal state, but represents it as infinitely more important than the present. The savages of America and other Pagan nations, entertain some glimmering prospect of a future state, and have some faint hope, that they shall exist after death. But their ideas of a future state are extremely gross and absurd. The Indian expects to find the same objects in another world, with which he has been conversant in this life. He expects to eat and drink and hunt and sleep after death, as he did before it. And Virgil, one of the most refined and elegant of the heathen poets, represents the spirits of departed heroes and law-givers, as pursuing the same employments and amusements, which they pursued before they left the body. But christianity gives us a view of the future state of existence, which is vastly more interesting and important.—It represents death as putting a final period to all the pursuits and enjoyments of this present life and transmitting the soul into a state

of eternal and unutterable happiness or misery. Every person who believes the Bible, believes that he and all his fellow-creatures are probationers for a happy or miserable eternity; and he expects soon to see himself and every other human being in a state infinitely different from the present, in which they will be rendered completely happy, or completely wretched forever, by the smiles or the frowns of their great and holy Creator. Such great and awful, such glorious and amiable objects the Bible exhibits before the minds of every people, who embrace it. And the belief and impression of such interesting and affecting objects cannot fail to enlighten and enlarge their understandings, and to have a powerful and happy influence upon their sentiments, character, conduct and state.

2. The Bible has a powerful tendency to impress the consciences, as well as to enlighten the understandings of those, who believe its divine inspiration and authority. No man can embrace any religion contrary to the dictates of his conscience, because religion always implies duty; and nothing can appear to be duty, which the conscience perceives to be wrong. Though mankind do embrace false and absurd religions, yet they never do it, until they have blinded and stupified their consciences. Those, who embrace the most false notions of religion, feel themselves bound in

conscience to do it. The Pagan, the Papist and the Mahometan feel themselves bound in conscience to believe and observe the absurdities and superstitions of their religions. Though every false scheme of religion has some influence over the conscience;—yet christianity has the most happy and controlling influence over the moral faculty. A false religion tends to stupify and stifle the voice of conscience; but the religion of the Bible always serves to enlighten and strengthen it to do its office. The Bible exhibits all created and uncreated objects in their proper and various relations. And these relations lay the foundation of moral obligation. We are bound to love and obey God, because of the relation, which he bears to us and which we bear to him. The general obligation of mankind to love one another arises from the general relation, which they bear to each other. And the particular obligations, which subsist between the various classes of men, arise from their particular relations. The more clearly, therefore, these relations and connections are exhibited before the mind, the more easily, sensibly and forcibly does the conscience feel the obligations, which are founded upon them.—And since the christian religion more fully unfolds those relations and connections, upon which its doctrines and duties are founded than any other religion; so it has a more commanding influence over

the consciences of those, who embrace it. In preaching the gospel the apostle carried conviction to the conscience of every one, who heard him. He says, "Therefore, seeing we have this ministry, as we have obtained mercy, we faint not; but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."—The gospel draws such a character of God and of Christ and of mankind and gives such a clear representation of the invisible and eternal world, that all its doctrines and duties appear to be true and to be founded in the very nature of things. And for this reason every one, who believes the gospel, must feel himself bound, or morally obliged to be and do whatever it requires. Christianity enlightens, arrests and binds the conscience. It is clothed with divine authority and commands obedience to the sovereign of the universe. False religions are the traditions and commandments of men. But the true religion claims a divine origin and speaks with supreme authority. And the conscience of every man in the world tells him, that he ought to obey the voice of his creator. When God commanded Abraham to sacrifice his son, he felt the authority of his maker and instantly submitted to his dread command. When God spake to three millions of people from

Mount Sinai, they unanimously acknowledged his authority and said, "All that the Lord our God hath said, we will do and be obedient." So all, who believe the christian religion, feel bound in conscience by the authority of its divine author to obey it.—Though their hearts relent, yet their consciences yield to the authority of God. Hence, christianity has a more sovereign control over the consciences of men than any other religion. It constrains every people, who acknowledge its divine origin, to view all moral objects as they are viewed by God, and to approve in their consciences what he approves and to condemn what he condemns. It transforms their moral sentiments into a resemblance of the moral sentiments of God, whom they profess to worship.

3. Christianity tends to produce the most happy effects in the hearts of a people, who embrace it. False religions have always deeply affected the hearts, as well as the understandings and consciences of men. The worship of false Gods has always inspired their votaries with the spirit of their imaginary deities. The worshippers of Moloch were cruel.—The worshippers of Mars were given to war and carnage. The worshippers of Bacchus were given to intemperance. And the worshippers of every false god among the heathen, have always meant to imbibe the spirit of the being or beings, to whom they

paid divine homage. Though false religions do not require the heart, but consist in external observances and ceremonies; yet they have a powerful influence upon the affections. But there is no religion, which forms and moulds and governs the heart so powerfully as the religion of the Bible. The great object of worship, which the Bible exhibits, is a being of perfect rectitude and infinite benevolence. It says, "God is love;" and that "he is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works." The first and great command of its divine author is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart;" and the second is, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."—The Bible requires all men "to be perfect, even as their Father, who is in heaven, is perfect." It requires all men to worship the true God, who is a spirit, in spirit, and in truth; and to be holy, because he is holy. Every precept of christianity is addressed to the heart, and requires pure, holy love, as the only obedience to the will of God. The gospel requires a spirit of universal benevolence, tenderness and kindness; and forbids all selfishness, cruelty, malice and revenge. And it requires all men to feel and express such benevolence, not only by precepts and prohibitions, but also by promises and threatenings. These promises and threatenings exhibit the most alluring and alarming motives to obedience, that can be

presented to the heart and conscience of rational and immortal creatures. The promises to the holy and virtuous carry all the light and glory and blessedness of heaven; and the threatenings denounce against all ungodliness and unrighteousness, the darkness and misery of hell. The motives of the gospel are clothed with the authority of God, and enforced by the whole weight of eternity.—They who believe and love the gospel, feel the mighty influence of its motives, to mould and form their views and feelings into a conformity to the views and feelings of the Father of mercies. Such was the effect upon the character and conduct of the ancient saints.—And such was the effect upon the primitive believers of christianity. Wherever they went, they were admired for their mutual affection and their universal benevolence. The heathen exclaimed, "How these christians love one another!" And notwithstanding primitive christianity has been greatly corrupted; yet it has had a transforming influence upon every nation and people, who have called themselves christians. It has loosened the cords of slavery; it has lightened the hands of tyrants; it has softened the hearts of persecutors; it has subdued the cruelty of savages; it has mitigated the horrors of war; and it has diffused a spirit of humanity and philanthropy through all the nations of christendom. So far as any nation has embraced christianity,

they have imbibed the benevolent, merciful and tender spirit of its divine author. . It is a well known fact, that the religion of the Bible has a powerful tendency to promote the highest happiness of any people, that embrace it. This subject suggests the following remarks.

1. Since the religion of the Bible has such a happy influence upon the understandings, consciences and hearts of men, it must tend to promote their *temporal* as well as their eternal happiness. Accordingly it is written, "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life, that *now* is, and of that which is to come." It is divinely promised, that when the Bible shall be received by all nations, they shall be united in peace, drop their swords, and turn their weapons of war into instruments of industry and utility. It is predicted, that the spread of the gospel shall pour a flood of light upon this dark world, so that the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun, as the light of seven days. It is foretold, that the universal influence of the gospel shall transform mankind into cordial friends, so that there shall be none to hurt or destroy in all the earth. And if the true religion does enlighten the understandings, awaken the consciences, and transform the hearts of men into the image of the kind parent of the universe, it must produce all the temporal and spiritual happiness, which, it

is predicted, shall exist on the earth, during the future and general prevalence of the gospel.—It must form good rulers and good subjects, good parents and good children, good masters and good servants, and fit all persons for usefulness and happiness, in every station and relation of life. Our religious privileges in this country are the source of our temporal prosperity and happiness. So far as we are a wise, pious, humane, free and happy people, it must be ascribed to the rich blessing of the oracles of God, which have been committed to our hands. Whatever is pious, virtuous, amiable and desirable among us, is owing to the influence of the Bible, which is conducive and necessary to the temporal as well as the spiritual and eternal happiness of human beings.

2. We ought to be more thankful for the oracles of God than for any other favor he has bestowed upon us. God has, indeed, ever since we have existed as a people, highly favored us with more mercies, than can be numbered, both public and private, both civil and religious. But we ought to consider the Bible the primary source of all our privileges and enjoyments. It has laid the foundation of our civil institutions and prosperity. It has consecrated our literary establishments. It has erected and preserved our houses of divine worship. It has given us the solemnities and consolations of the sabbath. It has spread light,

beauty and glory around our families. It has dispelled the darkness of the grave. It has presented to us the living and true God, and all the holiness and blessedness of his kingdom for our acceptance and enjoyment. JUDAH.



THE LADY'S LOOKING-GLASS.

The thirty-first chapter of the Proverbs has been called the Lady's Looking-Glass. In this glass, there is to be seen the most just and striking portrait of a virtuous woman, moving with dignity and gracefulness in her own proper sphere. She is represented as placed at the head of a numerous and flourishing family, where she displays her piety, prudence and economy, in conducting her domestic affairs. Such female virtues, displayed in the discharge of such female duties, deserve the attention, approbation and imitation of all, whom God has formed to move and act in the domestic circle. It has been a question, whether God has given superior mental powers as well as stronger nerves to men, than to women. Though it may be easy, yet it is not very important to decide this point. It does not admit of a doubt, whether our Creator has not formed men and women for very different employments; or whether he has not given them such corporeal and intellectual abilities, as are best adapted to their respective conditions and employments. Men

are formed and designed to cultivate the earth, to traverse the ocean, to transact commerce, to frame political constitutions, to enact and execute civil laws, to perform military service; and, generally, to do every thing, which is necessary to preserve public peace and order and safety. But women are formed and designed to perform less public and extensive, though not, perhaps, less necessary and important duties.—It is theirs to superintend and manage the variety of domestic concerns, which call for perpetual attention, industry and economy.—Their cares and labors continue, while the sun continues to shine, and the candle continues to burn. They have, therefore, peculiar need of vital piety, for their assistance and support, under their constant and heavy cares and burdens. Whether men are religious or irreligious themselves, they agree in the opinion, that piety is necessary to form the most important and beautiful trait in the female character. Solomon expresses the general sentiment of mankind, when he says, "Favor is deceitful and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised." The reason, why piety in women is more admired and valued than piety in men, is because it spreads a peculiar lustre over their natural excellencies, and eminently fits them for their appropriate employments in life.

I now propose to describe the

nature of true piety and its happy effects upon women in the discharge of their various and important duties.

True religion, or vital piety, consists, essentially, in the filial fear of God. The woman, that feareth the Lord, is, in the sense of the scriptures, a virtuous or pious woman. The filial fear of God is the beginning of that wisdom, which cometh from above, and which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. Though vital piety implies the belief of the pure doctrines of the gospel, and an external conformity to its requirements, yet it essentially consists in pure and holy affections. The reason, why experimental religion is so often called vital piety, is, because it consists in that holy love, which is the fulfilling of the law, and which never fails to produce a holy and devout life.—There are probably more pious women, than pious men in the world. And pious women are not only more numerous, but more pious than pious men. After their hearts have been renewed, they commonly become ardent and devout in their religious affections. Their peculiar duties and trials, and their retired situation, unitedly, lead them to improve the means of grace, to eye the hand of God in the dispensations of his providence, to seek divine support and comfort, and to cast themselves

with their cares and burdens upon the Lord. This is certainly true of the pious women in ancient times. How devotional was Hannah, the mother of Samuel; Elizabeth, the mother of John; Mary, the mother of Jesus; and Anna, the prophetess, who departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers, night and day. Whatever may be the reasons, why women are more generally and more eminently pious and devout than men, the fact is too plain from scripture and observation, to require particular illustration.

I, therefore, proceed to show, that vital piety will have a happy influence upon women in the discharge of their various and important duties, in their proper domestic situation. And I observe,

1. That piety will naturally dispose women to be industrious in the superintendence and management of their domestic concerns. The human race were originally formed and destined to be active and diligent in their various secular employments. When God placed Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, he let them know, that he did not place them in paradise to spend their days in indolence, but to dress and cultivate the garden by their daily cares and labors.—Eve, as well as Adam, was under moral obligation to improve her time in some manual or mental employment; and the same obligation lies upon all her daughters, to improve their time in discharging

the duties of their domestic destination. Though some women may be placed in a higher station, and more affluent circumstances than others; yet none can be exempted from domestic cares, and but few from manual labor. The multiplicity of domestic cares and concerns is always more or less irksome to the feeble and delicate constitution of women; and sometimes too heavy to be borne. But piety is a principle of activity and self-denial, and never fails to dispose women to perpetual diligence in their ever necessary and important duties. Accordingly we find, that industry forms a very prominent trait in the scriptural character of the virtuous woman. "She seeketh wool and flax and worketh willingly with her hands. She riseth while it is yet night and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens. Her candle goeth not out by night.—She looketh well to the ways of her household and eateth not the bread of idleness." Such a pious mother will not only be active and diligent herself, but cause her daughters and all her domestics also to be active and faithful in whatever she employs them. Piety gives a peculiar dignity and gracefulness to a woman at the head of a numerous and industrious family.

2. It belongs to the mother not only to guide the house, but to instruct the children, who are more immediately and constantly under her care and eye. They are by

nature depraved and continually need maternal instruction and restraint. Mothers generally have more time, more opportunities and better talents to instruct little children, than fathers. The pious mother "openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness." The instructions, the reproofs, the restraints, the counsels and warnings, which flow from maternal affection and kindness, are adapted to make the deepest and most permanent impressions upon the tender and docile hearts of children and youth. It is well known, that pious mothers have often been happily instrumental of forming the characters of some of the brightest and best men, that have ever lived in the world. To mention particular instances: Samuel and Solomon received their first and best instructions from their mothers.—Solomon, under the name of Lemuel, records for the instruction of all future ages, the instruction and admonition, which his mother gave him in this tender and affectionate language: "What my son? and what the son of my womb? and what the son of my vows?" Paul reminds Timothy of the saving benefit he had received from the early instructions, which were poured into his young and tender mind by his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice. In reading the lives of great and good men, how often do we find them gratefully and respectfully mention their mothers, who early instilled into

their minds the first principles of piety and virtue? It is one of the principal duties of mothers to give children and youth under their care moral and religious instruction. And if they possess the spirit of vital piety, it will certainly animate and assist them in the faithful discharge of this important duty. They will early and tenderly teach their children, that they are sinful and guilty creatures, that they ought to repent of sin and pray to God for pardoning mercy; that they ought to remember the sabbath day to keep it holy; that they ought to read the Bible every day, and every sabbath attend the public worship of God; that they ought to remember their creator, and publicly devote themselves to his service in their youth; that they ought to treat their superiors, inferiors and equals with proper respect, attention and civility; that they ought to let no false, nor corrupt communication proceed from their mouth; that they ought seriously to consider their latter end, and make it their constant and principal concern to prepare for death and eternity. Such are the moral and religious instructions, that vital piety will dispose every mother to give to her young and rising family.

3. True piety will dispose women to consult the good of their families, by the practice of proper economy. This is a duty, which they are too apt to neglect, and will generally neglect, unless

they are under the happy influence of pious principles. The scripture represents them as peculiarly fond of making a gay and brilliant appearance, by rich ornaments and costly attire. If you look into the third chapter of Isaiah, you may see a long catalogue of female fineries severely reprobated. And if you look into other places of scripture, you will find women reprobated for this peculiar foible, and exhorted to put on more beautiful and valuable ornaments. The apostle says, "I will that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array, but which becometh women professing godliness, with good works." Peter also, speaking of females, says, "Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, and of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price.—For after this manner in the old time, the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves." These admonitions and exhortations seem to apply more particularly to females, who move in the higher circles, and possess, or imagine, they possess superior fortunes; but they are still applicable to such, as are placed in the lower walks of life. But as there is no intrinsic evil in mere ornaments themselves, so we may sup-

pose that women may innocently wear such ornaments, as their different ranks and fortunes allow, and the common modes of dress render decent and respectable in the view of those, who neither practise, nor approve of pride, prodigality, or extravagance.—It is well known, and has often been observed, that it greatly depends upon the domestic conduct of the wife, whether the husband shall rise or sink in property.—Piety will teach the mother to consult the good of her husband and family, and to maintain a proper economy in all her domestic affairs. It is said of the virtuous woman, “The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. She will do him good and not evil, all the days of her life. She considereth a field and buyeth it; with the fruit of her hand she planteth a vineyard. She is not afraid of the snow for her household; for all her household are clothed with scarlet. Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land.” This is a highly wrought, but a beautiful description of female economy. Female economy has done wonders. It has enriched and ennobled thousands of families. And the want of it has reduced as many to poverty and wretchedness.

4. Piety in women sanctifies and adorns their native virtue of piety and compassion to the sons and daughters of poverty, misfortune

and distress. They are naturally of a more kind and tender heart than men. Those who have traversed the interior parts of the eastern countries, where they have been exposed to heat and cold, to hunger and thirst, to poverty and sickness, to oppression and cruelty among barbarous nations, remember to inform us, that they have always found women more ready than men to afford relief in distress. This is a common and beautiful trait in the female character. But the woman of christian piety possesses a more steady and operative principle of beneficence and charity. She answers to the description drawn of her by the pen of inspiration. “In her tongue is the law of kindness. She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she stretcheth forth her hands to the needy.” The poor and needy in every part of the christian world receive more tokens of kindness and beneficence from the hands and hearts of christian women, than from any other source. Though they may be less liberal in the promotion of general literature and objects of public utility, yet they will do much more than men to alleviate the burdens and dry the tears of individuals, who are suffering in silence and obscurity.

5. Vital piety will greatly animate and assist women in their exertions to promote the success and influence of the gospel.—Though they are not called to preach nor teach in public assem-

blies, nor to go as missionaries in this land, or any other part of the world; yet they may do and ought to do much, in their own proper sphere, to promote the knowledge and religion of Christ, both where it is, and where it is not known. They can do a great deal by their prayers and private instructions and examples to cherish and revive religion in their own churches and congregations. The pious mother may persuade her husband and teach her children and domestics to keep the sabbath, to attend public worship and to support the ministry and ordinances of the gospel. She may likewise afford much aid in extending the gospel far and wide among the nations, that are famishing for the bread of life. She may give her two mites and induce others to give more largely to bible societies, education societies and foreign as well as domestic missionary societies. How many female benevolent societies have been already formed through the country and what vast sums have they personally thrown into the treasury of the Lord, or been instrumental of inducing other persons to throw into it. Was not much of the rich furniture of the tabernacle wrought by the ingenious, industrious and wise hearted women in Israel? Who were more friendly to Christ and the apostles, while preaching the gospel, than Martha, Mary, Lydia, and other women, professing godliness?—Women have always been the

primary and perhaps the principal instruments of maintaining the cause of religion in the world.—The primary instruments, I say, because they are the first to teach sons and daughters propriety, piety and virtue. It is under the superintendence, instruction and example of mothers, that the strongest habits of sons and daughters are first formed and that they are prepared to act their various parts on the stage of life. Both civil and religious society have more good or evil to expect from domestic education, over which mothers principally preside, than from all the schools, academies, colleges and universities in America. Though women are destined to act in a small and private circle; yet they have the most extensive and powerful influence upon the whole moral and religious world.

From the excellent character of pious women it may be remarked,

1. That they justly deserve the high respect and esteem of mankind. They who presume to depreciate their talents and importance, only betray their own vanity and ignorance. The first and small wheels, that move all the rest in any machine, produce the greatest and most important effects. So women, who move the first and small wheels in every moral and religious society, actually produce the greatest and most extensive effects in the moral and religious world. Though their influence is more silent and less visible than that of men, yet

it is no less powerful and useful. What great and happy influence had Bathsheba upon king David and king Solomon? How happily did Esther employ her piety and influence in saving a nation from destined destruction? Such pious women are celebrated by the inspired writers; and they ought to be universally esteemed and admired. "The woman, that feareth the Lord, shall be praised;—for her price is far above rubies." The praise of a pious and virtuous woman may, with the greatest propriety, be as public and extensive as her importance and usefulness.

2. This subject shows us how parents, generally, ought to educate their daughters. Parents in this country have commonly been of one opinion and pursued one method in the education of their sons. They have usually given them an education in the common schools; and, when they were designed for one of the learned professions, a public education. But within a few years a new era of female education has commenced in this country. Fathers and mothers seem to be agreed, that it is best to give their daughters a higher, more public, more refined and literary education than they formerly gave them. After they have attended common schools a very little time, they now send them to female boarding schools and academies, to learn English grammar, elegant composition, geography, history, mathematics,

logic, metaphysics, natural philosophy, astronomy and chemistry, as well as poetry, painting, and other refined accomplishments.—Now admitting that daughters are as capable as sons of becoming adepts in the profound sciences and elegant arts, still it is a question, whether it would be so useful to daughters as to sons, to become acquainted with the higher branches of the arts and sciences. "A little learning is a dangerous thing." To acquire the thorough knowledge of any art or science, and especially of the arts and sciences in general, requires much time, much study, and much expence.

But supposing daughters could spare time, endure study and meet the expence of property, in acquiring a large stock of general knowledge, to what valuable purpose could they apply it? They are not to be preachers, nor attornies, nor physicians, nor judges, nor governors, nor generals, nor senators, nor representatives, nor ambassadors at foreign courts; but they are to be *keepers at home*, to *guide the house*, and to move in a small, private, domestic circle, and there to form and mould those young and tender minds, that are afterwards to fill the widest spaces in the church and state, and exercise a supreme control over the largest nations and kingdoms on earth. Daughters can derive but very little benefit from a literary and scientific education; but they derive immense advantages from a

good, private, maternal education. That time, which young daughters spend at female boarding-schools and academies is generally worse than lost; for instead of fitting, it serves to indispose and unfit them for the discharge of those necessary and important duties of their domestic destination. Undoubtedly those parents, who move in the higher ranks of life, and possess larger fortunes, may be allowed to give all their children a higher education than other parents. But all parents ought to have respect to the future business and prospects of their children, that they may be so educated as to become the most useful and happy in life. A literary education is generally a greater disadvantage than advantage to sons, if they do not pursue some literary profession. And unless daughters are destined to enjoy easy and affluent circumstances in life, a refined education will render this hard, rough world, very grating and painful to their too delicate notions and feelings. But a private, pious, maternal, education is calculated to prepare daughters for whatever low or high station they may be called to fill. And nothing can justify parents in neglecting or refusing to give them such an education.

3. This subject shows how important it is, that women should be truly and eminently pious. Vital, experimental piety, has a most happy and powerful tendency to promote, their own personal peace

and comfort under all the heavy, constant and numerous cares and burdens, that may fall to their lot. But it is still vastly more important to dispose, assist, and animate them to the faithful discharge of their domestic duties. They have the first care of young, immortal beings, whose temporal and eternal interests are suspended upon their pious instructions, restraints and examples. Happy are those families, in which mothers faithfully discharge these duties. But unhappy, indeed, are those families in which mothers neglect, or refuse to instill the first principles of virtue and piety into the young and tender minds of sons and daughters. It is most devoutly to be wished, that pious mothers in our Israel might be greatly multiplied. This would afford the most happy prospect of the increase of pious families; and the increase of pious families would afford the most happy prospect of the increase of piety and morality. But without piety, neither mothers nor daughters are prepared to meet the burdens nor perform the duties of life. "Favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised." SOLOMON.

THE UNREASONABLENESS OF ENMITY
TOWARDS JESUS CHRIST.

It is proposed, in this communication, to show that sinners hate Jesus Christ, and that their hatred of him is unreasonable. From that

immense mass of evidence which might be brought forward to establish these points, only a small portion can now be exhibited.—It is hoped, however, that they will be proved to the satisfaction of all candid inquirers after truth. I shall,

I. Say something of the enmity of sinners towards Jesus Christ.

That sinners, as soon as they become acquainted with the character of Christ, do hate him, is a doctrine of scripture, to the truth of which their own conduct bears witness. Long before Christ's incarnation, it was predicted, that by "his brethren and kinsmen according to the flesh," he would be "despised and rejected."—This prediction was fulfilled when he appeared among them. He said himself, that the Jews "both saw and hated both him and his Father." And through all his public ministry, they opposed and persecuted him; and, at last, arraigned, condemned and crucified him. By this they proved, not only that they did hate him, but that their hatred was most violent and malignant. Christ likewise taught, that this spirit of enmity to him, was not confined to the Jews; for he said expressly, that the *world* hated him, that is, sinners in distinction from saints, whether Jews or Gentiles. And wherever his gospel has been sent, and his character made known, sinners have proclaimed, in language a thousand fold more eloquent and forcible than they could in words, their bit-

ter enmity towards him; have proclaimed it by their hostility to his doctrines, their persecution of his friends, their rejection of his calls, and their fixed opposition to his authority and government.—Nor is there the least reason to doubt, that sinners now, if placed in the same circumstances in which the Jews were placed, would treat him just as the Jews treated him, and would imbrue their hands in his blood. The carnal mind, the unrenewed heart, is enmity against God, is enmity against Christ. Sinners hate him, as much as they love themselves. And they know from experience, that they love themselves with all their heart and strength, and seek their own glory as their great and last end. I proceed to show,

II. That the enmity of sinners towards Jesus Christ is unreasonable. This point will be proved, if it can be made to appear that he is not a sinful, but a holy being. For all must admit, that nothing but wickedness can render any intelligent creature, a proper object of hatred. And if a being is not a proper object of hatred, it must be unreasonable to hate him.

I ask, then, is there any evil in Jesus Christ? If there is, it must appear in his conduct, which is not concealed, but open to the view and inspection of heaven, earth and hell. Was there any evil in his revealing and unfolding to mankind the great system of divine truth, in teaching them the character and ways of God, and

their own characters, obligations and prospects? Was there any evil in his exposing and condemning all their sins and vices, and in the ceaseless efforts and sacrifices he made for their temporal and eternal good? Was there any evil in the perfect submission to his Father's will and devotion to his cause, which he uniformly manifested in the scenes of unparalleled trial and difficulty through which he passed? Was there any evil in his leaving heaven, coming into this fallen, hostile, ruined world, and suffering the tortures of crucifixion for its redemption? Was there any evil in his praying, when on the cross, for his murderers, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do?" Does he commit any evil in offering to sinners, on the lowest possible terms, the richest blessings that he can bestow, or they receive? in renewing, and pardoning, and preparing for glory, all who were chosen in him before the foundation of the world? and in making known his purpose, finally to reward both the righteous and the wicked according to their works? And when, at the opening of all the scenes of terror and of glory, which will open at the bar of God, Jesus Christ shall more fully disclose to the assembled universe all that he did, while personally on earth, and all that he shall have done from the dawn to the close of time, will any evil, any wrong be found in him? Will he not then appear to the whole

intelligent creation, ever to have been entirely free from every moral stain? Of this there can be no reasonable doubt. His character, however, is not only untainted by sin, but glorious in holiness, as is evident from the great end for which he came into the world, from all that he has done and suffered, and is continually doing for its accomplishment. The excellence of the end he seeks in all his works, proves that they are not evil, but good. This end, which, in magnitude and grandeur, infinitely surpasses all others, is the glory of God. To make the most full and perfect displays of all the glorious attributes of his nature, and thus to secure the everlasting existence of the greatest sum of blessedness in his empire, is the object which Christ invariably pursues with all the strength and ardor of his infinite mind. He is, then, a being of transcendent goodness. His heart is love, pure, impartial benevolence, which is commensurate with his knowledge and his power.—And his matchless benevolence is manifest in the life of constant self-denial, and labor, and suffering, that he lived, and especially, in the humiliating and painful, but triumphant death to which he voluntarily submitted. From his cross it breaks forth and shines in all its glory, forever enlightening the universe with the brightness of its beams.

Christ's enemies, both on earth and in hell, have tried for thou-

sands of years to convict him of partiality, injustice and oppression; but all their vigorous and ceaseless efforts to make this appear, have only served to set the innocence and goodness of his character in a clearer and stronger light. And some of them, after all, have reluctantly testified to its purity and excellence. Christ himself, once asked his enemies, who had charged him with wrong, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" But being conscious that they could not support the charge, they shrunk from the attempt, and continued to assail him with their blasphemies. When Pilate, who was urged by the Jews, to put him to death, asked them, "Why, what evil hath he done? I find in him no fault at all;" those Jews, instead of pointing out the evil, only exclaimed, "Crucify him, crucify him." And Pilate himself called him "this *just* person," at the moment he delivered him into their murderous hands. The centurion, also, the commander of Christ's executioners, said of him, at the closing scene, "Truly this was a *righteous* man." And even the devils were compelled to make to him, this memorable confession, "We know thee, who thou art, the *holy One* of God."—Thus Christ's deadliest foes, admit the correctness of the inspired declarations concerning him, that he is holy, harmless, undefiled, and full of grace and truth.—Now, since Jesus Christ is not a sinful, but a perfectly good and

holy being, as the sacred oracles announce, as both his friends and enemies declare, and as all his conduct proves; it follows, that all the enmity which sinners feel towards him, is utterly groundless, is altogether unreasonable. And this accords with his own view of the subject; for speaking of sinners, he saith, "They hated me without a cause," that is, without any *just* cause—without any good and sufficient reason.

1. It appears from the view which has been taken of this subject, that sinners hate Jesus Christ, because he is good and does good. They cannot hate him for any thing evil in his character or actions; because there is no evil, no wrong, no unrighteousness in him. On the contrary, he is a being of infinite and unchanging goodness, which he is constantly displaying before the eyes of his intelligent creatures, in all the wonders of redemption, in all the stupendous operations of his hand. And when sinners have any realizing sense of the truth respecting him and his ways, they perceive that his impartial goodness, that his disinterested benevolence is against them, that it leads him to oppose and threaten to destroy all their selfish schemes and interests; and for this they hate him with a perfect hatred, and would, were it in their power, wrest the sceptre from his hand, and strike the crown from his head, and put an end to his existence.

2. In the light of this subject, we may see something of the awful depravity of sinners. Surely, their deadly enmity towards Jesus Christ, a being of boundless moral excellence and glory, proves, if any thing can, the *total* sinfulness of their hearts and lives. Nothing can equal their ingratitude and baseness, but the mercy and compassion of this blessed Being, who has died on the cross to make atonement for them, who has opened to them the gates of paradise, and who stands at their door urging them to enter, till his head is wet with the dew, and his locks with the drops of the night.

3. If sinners do hate Jesus Christ, then too much pains cannot be taken to make them sensible of their hatred. They are more inclined to believe that they love, than that they hate him; and often, either from stupidity, or from false views of his character, they cherish the belief that they love him. They are, therefore, in imminent danger of being deceived respecting their own characters and prospects, of concluding, upon the ground of their supposed friendship to Christ, that they are saints and in the path to heaven. It is, then, vastly important to convince them, if possible, of their hatred to the divine Redeemer, who is omnipotent to destroy, as well as to save. The way to do this, is to labor to show

them his true character as plainly as possible; to present him before them in all the glory of his holiness, and justice, and sovereignty, and grace, and to make them see and feel that their hearts and their immortal interests are for ever in his hand, and at his disposal. If they can be made to know and realize these things, they will no longer doubt whether they are real foes of God manifest in the flesh, no longer doubt whether they are in the road to endless perdition.

Finally. Let sinners be persuaded now to give up their unreasonable and criminal enmity against Jesus Christ, and enthrone him in their affections. He is worthy of their supreme love. He is worthy of their highest homage. He is worthy of their constant and undivided service. And if they give him their hearts, which are his due, he will graciously pardon and save them, notwithstanding all their sinfulness and ill-desert.—But if they persist in their enmity and rebellion against him, he will make them fearful monuments of his punishing justice. And when he shall send them away to everlasting punishment, their own enlightened consciences will approve of his conduct; while all heaven, beholding the bright displays of his glory, will resound with alleluias to his name.

THEOPHILUS.

THE GOSPEL ITS OWN WITNESS TO THOSE
WHO EMBRACE IT.

No. III.

WHAT IS IMPLIED IN EMBRACING THE
GOSPEL.

1. This implies, a clear and correct knowledge of it. It is impossible to embrace the gospel without understanding it. The gospel is good news, which Christ was sent into the world to proclaim.— Before he appeared in the flesh, it was predicted, that he should be a preacher. He said by the prophet Isaiah, “The spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them, that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.” As soon as Christ was baptized and entered upon his public ministry, he came from Galilee and began to preach the gospel of the kingdom. The good news, which he proclaimed was, that “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” In explaining and teaching this summa-

ry of the gospel, he declared the essential and peculiar doctrines upon which it is founded. The doctrines, which he preached, are connected and consistent, and comprise a harmonious system of divine truths. These truths are the words of eternal life, which his true disciples understood; and which all persons, who embrace the gospel, must understand. It appears from what Christ taught in the parable of the sower, that an understanding of the gospel is implied in embracing it. He said, “He, that received seed into the good ground, is he, that heareth the word and understandeth it.” When he had spoken a number of parables, he said unto his disciples, “Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, yea, Lord.”

2. In order to embrace the gospel, its essential and peculiar doctrines must not only be understood, but be believed to be true. There were many, who heard Christ preach, and understood what he said, but did not believe it. They knew, that he professed to be the son of God, the promised Messiah and the Savior of the world. For he expressly said, “The son of man is come to seek and to save that, which is lost.” And again, “If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.” Yet they did not believe this essential doctrine of the gospel to be true. For it is written, “Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me, shall never

hunger; and he, that believeth on me, shall never thirst. But I said unto you, that ye also have seen me and believe not." Men may now understand and yet disbelieve and reject the peculiar doctrines of the gospel. But they, who truly embrace the gospel, not only believe that it is of divine authority, but that it contains those doctrines, which are essential to salvation. Peter said in the name of the other apostles, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure, that thou art that Christ, the son of the living God." To embrace the gospel implies, not merely a belief, that it is of divine inspiration, but a belief that the doctrines, which it contains, are true. The gospel must be embraced, not as a cunningly devised fable, but as a divine revelation of the truths, which are necessary to be believed in order to salvation. But men may understand the gospel of Christ, and believe its doctrines to be true, while they hate and reject the counsel of God against themselves.

It is therefore necessary to observe,

3. That embracing the gospel implies a cordial approbation of the doctrines, which it contains. Christ said "to those Jews, who believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." He made su-

preme love to himself an indispensable condition of becoming his disciples. He said, "He, that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he, that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me. And he, that taketh not his cross and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He, that findeth his life, shall lose it; and he, that loseth his life for my sake, shall find it." It is only in view of the doctrines of the gospel, that any person can have the true knowledge of Jesus Christ. And without this knowledge, no one can exercise that supreme love to him, which is necessary in order to be his disciple. It is impossible to love Christ and yet hate the doctrines, which exhibit his real glory and the great design of his mediation. True love to his doctrines, is implied in embracing the gospel. The primitive followers of Christ, who cordially embraced the gospel, were called christians, because they professed to understand, believe and love his peculiar doctrines.—Nor can any persons now sincerely embrace the gospel, unless they understand, believe and love the essential and peculiar doctrines, which Christ taught and which are the words of eternal life.

No. IV.

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST THE TRUE WAY OF SALVATION.

The apostles and early disciples of Christ founded their hope of salvation upon the Gospel, not

without evidence, but upon decisive and convincing evidence, which excluded all doubt from their minds. When they were asked, whether they would renounce Christ and his doctrines, Peter said without any hesitation, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure, that thou art that Christ, the son of the living God." This was as much as to say, "We see, and know that we see, that thou art the way, the truth and the life, as thou hast taught us. We have understood and believed the doctrines thou hast preached, upon the evidence thou hast exhibited; and we have cordially and confidently hoped to be saved in the way thou hast shown us." Such language they, who have embraced the gospel, can sincerely adopt. They know by happy experience, that they have been taught by the gospel, the true way to obtain and enjoy everlasting life.

1. They have been taught by the gospel, the native and total depravity of their hearts. The Lord Jesus Christ, when he was on earth, plainly and fully taught the total depravity of all mankind by nature. He knew what was in man and he drew the character of sinners in the truest colours. He said, "I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you." He said, "ye make clean the out side of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Ye are like unto

whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones and of all uncleanness. Even so ye outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity." He said to sinners, "ye are of your father, the devil." Such an odious and guilty character the gospel ascribes to all mankind, as they are by nature. And they, who truly embrace the gospel, know that this description of human depravity is true, by their own experience. For they have seen and known the plague of their own hearts. Though they are naturally as proud and selfish as other persons and voluntarily ignorant and insensible of their own sinfulness and ill-desert, yet they have been effectually taught by the gospel their native and total sinfulness. They know that they are by nature children of wrath, being dead in trespasses and sins and under the entire dominion of the carnal mind, which is enmity against God and not subject to his law, neither indeed can be. And by a conviction and knowledge of their total depravity they are prepared to understand the essential and peculiar doctrines of the gospel and to see that these doctrines exhibit the true method of salvation for such sinful creatures, as they find themselves to be.

2. They who truly embrace the gospel, have been taught that they are under the condemning sen-

tence of the divine law, and justly exposed to endless destruction. Christ said, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish." This declaration certainly implies, that sinners are in a perishing condition. He said to his hearers, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers! how can ye escape the damnation of hell!" He said, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." And again, "He that believeth not, is condemned already." And it is written, "He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." He illustrated these declarations in a number of parables; and particularly in the parable of the rich man and the beggar. And he taught the same doctrine in his representation of the general judgment. These representations of the ill-desert and condemnation of sinners, they, who have embraced the gospel, know to be true. They know what it is to be evidently and sensibly under the condemning sentence of the law and exposed to the awful wrath of God. They have seen and felt, that they justly deserved that everlasting punishment, which God in the law threatens to every sinner, and have known themselves to be imminently exposed to it. They have seen the pit of destruction opened before them, and viewed themselves ready to fall into it at any moment. They have found

themselves to be in a condition as guilty and wretched, as sinners are declared to be in the scriptures. They know, by experience, that they deserve everlasting condemnation and punishment, and that it is wholly of the Lord's mercies, that they have not been consumed and destroyed for ever.—By such a conviction and impression of their own ill-desert, which is confirmed and increased by their constant experience, they are prepared, more and more clearly to see and deeply to feel, that the gospel reveals and exhibits the true way of salvation.

3. The gospel has taught those who embrace it, the necessity of renouncing self-righteousness and self-dependence, in order to be saved. Christ said to his hearers, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." He illustrated this declaration by the parable of the pharisee and publican, to convince those, who trusted in themselves, that they were righteous, of their dangerous error. He represented the pharisee as boasting of his goodness, and relying upon his worthiness for acceptance with God. And by way of contrast he represents the publican, as discarding self-righteousness and self-dependence, and crying, with the deepest self-abasement, "God be merciful to me, a sinner." And Christ says, "This man went down to his house justified rather than

the other." They who have embraced the gospel, know what it is to renounce self-righteousness and self-dependence, in regard to their justification before God.— They have found, that they could do nothing to make any atonement for their offences, or to recommend themselves to his forfeited favor. They have, therefore, understandingly and voluntarily renounced their own righteousness and worthiness as the foundation of salvation. They have been thoroughly taught, that it is perfectly unreasonable and altogether dangerous to place any dependence upon their own worthiness for justification. They have, therefore, been prepared to see and know, that the gospel establishes a real and solid foundation for their pardon and salvation. It may be observed,

4. That Christ has taught those who have embraced the gospel, the necessity of believing in him, and coming to him, for salvation from endless punishment. He says, "Come unto me, all ye, that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." He says, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." He said, "All that the Father giveth me, shall come unto me; and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." Peter and the other apostles found these declarations to be the words of eter-

nal life. For when Christ put the question, whether they would renounce their entire dependence upon him for salvation, they replied, "To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure, that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." They who have embraced the gospel, can adopt the same language.— They know, that by coming to Christ, they have found rest to their souls. They see and know, by experience, that having understood, believed and loved the doctrines, which Christ taught, they have found the true way of salvation. And they are conscious, that they have those holy affections in embracing the gospel, by which they are entitled to salvation, and qualified to enjoy the kingdom of God. They have the witness in themselves, that the gospel is true, and that it has produced a saving effect upon their hearts. They have an assurance, which is founded upon their own knowledge, and upon the exercise of holy and gracious affections in view of the essential and peculiar doctrines of the gospel, that the gospel of Jesus Christ is the true way of salvation.

JOHN.

A CONTRAST.

This world in itself, is involved in the most gloomy and perplexing darkness. In this darkness there appears no light, but what

shines in the face of Jesus Christ. An innumerable multitude of rational creatures, who are hateful and hate one another, and who also hate their holy and blessed creator, are an affecting and sorrowful sight. Few of the ungodly allow themselves to think closely and deeply on the wickedness of human beings. Yet some infidels have possessed superior discernment and sensibility. When such persons have considered the character and condition of themselves and their fellow-creatures, they have been perplexed and unhappy. Yet in the pride of their hearts, they have usually maintained a haughty silence, and refused to confess the humbling truths, which they have been obliged to feel. Every reflecting person, who refuses to view this world in connection with the work of redemption, must be wretched and hopeless. The unbeliever finds himself a sinful, hateful and guilty creature. Yet he is so wise in his own conceit, that he refuses to be taught the counsel of heaven. Still he sighs and wonders, why a world of creatures like himself should exist. Would he humbly seek wisdom and listen to the voice of God in the gospel, he might be relieved; he might be happy and rejoice forever. "But the way of the wicked is as darkness; they know not at what they stumble."—Hear the mournful reflections of one of the acutest and proudest of infidel philosophers.*

"Who can, without horror, consider the whole earth as the empire of destruction! It abounds in wonders; it abounds also in victims. It is a vast field of carnage and contagion. Every species is, without pity, pursued and torn to pieces, through the earth and air and water. In man there is more wretchedness than in all other animals put together. He smarts continually under two sources of evil, which other animals never feel;—anxiety and listlessness in appetite, which make him weary of himself. He loves life and yet he knows he must die. If he enjoy some temporal good, for which he is thankful to heaven, he suffers various evils and is at last devoured by worms. This knowledge is his fatal prerogative. Other animals have it not. He feels it every moment rankling and corroding in his breast. Yet he spends the transient moments of his existence in diffusing the misery which he suffers; in cutting the throats of his fellow-creatures for pay; in cheating and being cheated; in robbing and being robbed; in serving, that he may command; and in repenting of all that he does. The bulk of mankind are nothing more than a crowd of wretches, equally criminal and unfortunate; and the globe contains rather carcasses than men. I tremble upon a review of this dreadful picture, to find that it implies a complaint against divine providence;

* Voltaire.

*and I wish I had never been born.”**

Paul as clearly saw and as deeply felt the wickedness and misery of mankind, as Voltaire. But he had also seen the Lord Jesus Christ, whom Voltaire hated; and had felt the power of the gospel, which Voltaire despised. The gospel afforded the apostle light and hope, and joy and peace, amidst all the darkness and sorrow of this evil world. And it gave him an assurance of endless rest and glory in heaven. Hear his own words—“For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving diverse lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but ac-

cording to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”

As fully and clearly as the wisdom and power, the justice and mercy of God are seen in the work of redemption, so full and clear will be the light, that is enjoyed respecting the existence of this dark and evil world. How sweet and pleasant is the light, which shines in such gloomy and oppressive darkness! Blessed are they, who can truly say, “God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”

* Fuller's Essay on Truth.

EXTRACTS.

DIVES AND LAZARUS.

The difference of condition between these persons is represented to be the greatest possible in both states of existence; but wholly reversed. The rich man is described to be in the most desirable earthly state. He was clothed in purple and fared sumptuously every day. The purple with which he was clothed was a badge of authority; so that to riches, he probably had joined power and

influence, as it commonly happens in such cases. The sumptuous fare of every day shows how plentifully he was stored with the goods of time. The account is short, but it could not be drawn more emphatically descriptive of wealth, power and pleasure, which are all that the world can give.—His purple clothing describes power and authority, which many ambitiously seek, and a few obtain; and his daily sumptuous fare

is proof both of his riches and his sensual taste and indulgence.—He was indulged in the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. The greater part of the world are earnestly attempting to be in the same state. How many hearts burn with the desire to be in this condition, and never attain it because God is too good to give it to them ! How many, who have not yet come to the end of the experiment, are still hoping to obtain ! We see the end of all this, for he died and was buried—was cut off in the midst of a pleasurable, wealthy and honorable course. In death he was weak like other men, and all his earthly advantages were no protection against the displeasure of his Judge. Conceive the rich man opening his eyes on the eternal world in torment ; and hear him who was clothed in purple, begging without avail for a drop of water to cool his tongue !—What an amazing reverse of condition ! What a change, thus suddenly to lay aside his purple and be found in torment where the least favor could not be granted him ! O dangerous power and wealth and sensuality, if such be the end to which ye lead men ;—who that knows the consequence, would not tremble at his own earthly desires ! O infatuated children of men, how can ye be so solicitous for the purple and the sumptuous fare of this world, when it must so soon be said, they are dead and buried ! It is wish-

ed that to such this address may reach ; but it is probable they will never read, or if they begin, they will spurn the sentiments as being inconsistent with all their plans of pleasure, power and wealth.

Lazarus was in all worldly things poor and afflicted indeed ! He was a beggar, and it seems lawfully so, for he was covered with disease, and being thus unable to help himself, was laid at the gate of the rich man, desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from his table. The dogs, who were companions in his meal, licked the wounds which men had not charity to bind up.

O how different was the rich man, and all the company around him, from the good Samaritan ! Many an one in reading this story with a pained heart, hath wished the good Samaritan had been there, that the wounds of Lazarus might have been mollified with ointment. But there were better messengers near him. His death approached, and angels were hovering around to conduct the happy soul to glory. There was honesty, there was goodness, there was a love of God in this poor man's heart ; there was a heavenly spirit in a diseased tabernacle of clay. Here was a child of glory hid from human view, by a diseased, afflicted state on earth ; but the covenant love and faithfulness of God knew his child in this loathsome situation—God had never forgotten him—he had always

heard his prayer, and a book of remembrance had been kept, both of his fidelity and his sorrows.—And angels were prepared to bring him hence to the glory decreed to him from the foundations of the world. How vast the transition, in a moment, from the pains of a dying body, to a habitation not made with hands eternal in the heavens, to a crown of righteousness, to a weight of glory, to a place and seat near the throne of God to join in his praise forever! Transported in a moment from being a beggar in this world, to eat of the bread and drink of the water of life forever, and be a co-heir together with Jesus Christ, of the fullness of God through all eternity! Removed from begging crumbs under the table of luxury and at the proud, unfeeling gate of affluence and power, to set in judgment on those who are unholily, great and rich and influential in this world of sin. For, saith the apostle, “do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world.”

Having noticed the difference of condition in these persons separately, which was made by death; let us now compare them, and judge whose character and state was most desirable. We know that the rich man shone in the eyes of the world, and that multitudes envied his state—many courted his favor, and said in their hearts, O that we could be like Dives! The same persons would naturally shun the groans of pained

Lazarus, and think him an outcast from his Maker's favor. But how falsely they judged! They saw not with the eye of Omniscience—nor had they read the book of divine counsels, which is every day opening by the events of his government! They had not looked into eternity, nor heard the groans or praises of that state! They had never counted the cost of a sinful life, nor considered the glories that await humble and persevering piety, through the goodness of God. In the fates of the rich man and Lazarus, let us see the truth.—How strangely changed! the man, who had power and influence, in a prison of eternal darkness; and the beggar on a throne of glory! The man of wealth begging in vain for a drop of water; while the poor saint was drinking at rivers of pleasures forever! The sensualist eternally tormented; the pious soul embosomed forever in the sight and enjoyment of God! And it was death which made all this change. How solemn! how interesting the moment of departure!



A NARRATIVE OF THE CONVERSION OF Miss X.

The subject of the following narrative is in her long home; and, we may well believe, in glory.

This person was in low circumstances, and went abroad to work, in different families. So poor had been her advantages, that she was never learned to read. Repeatedly I had taken occasion to speak

to her, relative to her spiritual concerns. But I found her ignorant and unconcerned.

One day at meeting, I perceived this girl was in tears, and appeared very attentive. The same appearance was afterward repeated, and continued. I conversed with her, to learn the reason of her trouble. She informed, that death stared her in the face.—She saw she must die; and the event seemed near and dreadful. I could not perceive any real conviction of sin. I endeavoured to give her instruction.

She became a constant attendant on all religious meetings; and was generally in tears while attending. Her views of death continued; and she was more and more affected with the subject.

After a while, I perceived she had a degree of conviction of sin. She spake of being a sinner; and was afraid to appear before God in judgment. She continued thus, some months, with her conviction of sin increasing. She became greatly troubled, as being a great sinner. Her convictions gradually became clear and rational.

On a sabbath day, her distress had become extreme. At a conference, held just before night, at a private house, I conversed with her, and found her convictions deep and most pungent. She had a great sense of the Majesty of God, and of the wickedness of her own heart.

Returning home, with several in company, I conversed with her.

Among many striking things, she said, *O Mr. S. you have often preached to us on the depravity of the human heart, and told us how we all by nature hated God! I did not believe a word of it. But O, you did not tell the tenth part of the enmity I now feel!* Her expressions of her views and feelings were extraordinary, and very affecting. She cried aloud, wrung her hands, and passed swiftly on before us.

The next morning I went to see her. She came down from her chamber. I asked how she felt now? She spake of her being a poor vile creature; but went immediately on, to express a new source of troubles. She said, she had been thinking and looking abroad that morning, and she saw God in every thing. And every thing was praising him, but she, and other miserable sinners! The birds praised him, the trees, and the grass, every thing spake God's glory. But she, a wretch, never praised him. She expressed much grief and astonishment at herself for her never having praised so great and good a Being, when his glory was so manifest.

I was informed, that she had been out abroad, that morning, to speak to her mates as they passed by. She would even lay hold of them, and tell them what a great, and good being God was; and how she longed that they might praise him, if she did not.

I found she had not the least idea of any saving change, as hav-

ing been wrought in her heart.— And did not suggest to her any idea that I thought her heart was renewed. I endeavored to give her such instructions as I thought best; and retired. She thought upon what had been said, and felt such an ardent desire to be able to praise God, that she went to converse with a very pious man, in the vicinity, with whom she had lived, to see if he could give any further direction how she might be able to do the duty, on which her heart was so much set. He told her she must pray to God that she might be enabled to praise him. She soon after retired, and attempted to comply with his direction. While on her knees in her closet, she found her difficulties removed, and found she could praise God. Her joys were inexpressible.

So remarkable were her appearance and conversation, that even despisers of religion were struck, and acknowledged that *something strange had taken place ! For this person could never converse so before !*

She mourned and grieved for poor perishing sinners. She longed and prayed for their salvation. As to her own salvation, it seemed much out of her sight. She said little or nothing concerning it; but was wholly engaged for the glory of God, and the salvation of sinners. A minister in conversation with her, asked her how she should feel, if after all she should be sent to misery? She replied

with the greatest readiness and simplicity, as though it was no matter what became of her;—that she should delight in praising and adoring God, even should his glory require her destruction.

A female professor of religion had occasion to sleep one night with this young convert, and related, that she appeared in the highest strains of devotion, in the course of the night, even in her sleep. She prayed for sinners; and sung praise to God.

She joined the church; and as long as I heard of her, she adorned her profession. After this she lived at a distance from me, till her death.

DR. GILBEE'S DYING TESTIMONY.

The night before this excellent man departed, he sent for a few of his most intimate friends in the town, in order to leave with them his dying testimony. He addressed them to the following purpose: "I do not think it right to quit this world without leaving behind me my dying testimony, for the comfort of my people. I charge you, therefore, to tell them from me, that the truths which I have preached to them bear me up now above the fear of death. My faith in Christ is without a cloud, and makes me happy in the prospect of death. The Gospel supports my soul; but I have to repent that I have not been more faithful and zealous for the Lord. The religion of Jesus is so consoling to me, that it suppresses all doubts

and tears. "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."— Though my family at this time want a father's care, yet with Christ I can confidently trust my soul, my family, and my people; knowing that infinite wisdom cannot err.

"Tell my people, that I feel myself a sinner, a penitent sinner, a sinner saved by divine grace; and charge them to cleave to the Lord with full purpose of heart, and they will find the blessed effects of this in life, and the comfort of it in the prospect of death. Tell them to be rooted and grounded in the truths of that Gospel which I have declared unto them. Yes, tell them from me, their dying pastor; from one who has a regard for their immortal interests; to watch and pray much, that their spiritual enemies may not get the advantage over them. I entreat them to attend diligently on all the means of grace, waiting upon God, that they be not moved from the hope of the Gospel; and let them not be ashamed to declare to the world that they are on the Lord's side. Let them act a faithful part, that they may in their last moments say, from heartfelt experience, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

"Tell those of them who have some thoughts of religion, not to put off such concerns to a future time, but to be in earnest now; for time fleeth fast away, and

death is at their door. O bid them from me not to trifle with their precious time, but to seek Christ with their whole hearts while he may be found. The work is most important; let them no longer halt between two opinions, but be decisive, seeing their eternal salvation depends upon it.

"Tell those of my parishioners who have made light of the truths which I have preached, now to reflect and consider how many opportunities they have lost, how many sermons they have heard with indifference, how many sabbaths they have trifled away, and how much time they have squandered which can never be recalled. O tell them, that it is my earnest prayer that the death of their minister may be the life of their souls. Assure them, that I find the world to be now what it has been to me for a long time, nothing more than a shadow, a vapor, a bubble, a nothing. Tell those who have treated me and the truths which I have preached with scorn and contempt, that I now solemnly declare my firm persuasion, in the prospect of my speedy dissolution, that nothing but faith in the crucified Redeemer, and a full dependance on his mercy, can render a sinner acceptable in the sight of God."

PLEASURES OF SICKNESS.

Few have celebrated the pleasures of sickness; as I have lately experienced them, permit me to say a little on the subject. And,

1st. As we are social beings, it is pleasant to experience those manifestations of sympathy which are sure to be called into action by sickness. A man feels that he is not alone in life. He perceives himself linked with thousands of others. All their anxieties and their attentions afford him pleasure.

2dly. It is pleasant to perceive in full operation that deeper, stronger love which exists in the breasts of those nearly related to us: to behold that love in all the richness of its spontaneous action overflowing with tenderness and care. We regret causing anxiety, but that anxiety is, nevertheless, a source of pleasure.

3dly. It is pleasant to discover how many are the comforts calculated to alleviate; how many well adapted helps there are of which we knew nothing before we wanted them:—the skill of physicians, the assiduity of nurses, the power of medicines, the multitude of little soothing ministers which wait and watch with prompt assiduity.

4thly. The sensation accompanying the experience of relief from suffering is indescribably pleasant. While all our powers are in full play we have no idea of the sweetness of health, but when pain and disease have held possession of the frame, then to feel them passing off, and vigor and ease once more returning—oh! it is delightful.—A glow of gratitude fills the heart. The strong recollection of what we have just undergone makes, by contrast, every moment pleasant,

and we are as persons born to new and more exhilarating hopes.

5thly. There is great pleasure in retirement from the bustle of the world. All is quiet in the sick chamber—no scenes of business invade its silent precincts.—Even to the man who loves employ there is pleasure in occasionally escaping from turmoil; and surely he who knows the preciousness of quiet, whose rich delight it is, in the secret of his heart, to hold converse with his God, he cannot but rejoice at the opportunity of retirement. Oh! it is sweet to lie and look upward—to think of that Father who for Christ's sake has forgiven us—to implore that Spirit, which like the dew on Hermon, descends to refresh the soul—to experience the fulfilment of those promises which are as green pastures and still waters.

6thly. The idea that you are thus experiencing profit is an abundant source of pleasure. To think that your Father has appointed your sickness because he loves you; that by it he means to draw you nearer to himself, to purify you, and prepare you to walk more stedfastly in your christian course, is most charming. And then the lifting up of the light of his countenance upon you, always great in proportion to your need—truly it is no cause of wonder that many have regretted the departure of sickness because with it departed their extraordinary consolation.—*Phil. Rec.*

THE CHRISTIAN MAGAZINE.

VOL. I.

APRIL, 1824.

No. 4.

ORIGINAL COMMUNICATIONS.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE DIVINE DECREES, THE FUNDAMENTAL DOCTRINE OF THE GOSPEL.

The best definition of the doctrine of God's decrees, that ever has been given, and perhaps the best, that can be given, is found in the Westminster catechism. In answer to the question, 'What are the decrees of God,' it is said, 'The decrees of God are his eternal purpose according to the counsel of his own will, whereby for his own glory he hath fore-ordained whatsoever comes to pass.— In eternity it depended entirely upon the determination of God, whether any other being should ever exist; because no other being could exist without his power and agency. His determination, therefore, must infallibly fore-ordain whatever should come to pass. Of all events, which were possible, the decrees of God rendered the existence of whatever comes to pass absolutely certain. God did not decree things because he saw that they would exist; but because he saw that they would not exist, without

his decrees. His decrees respected all future events, and precisely in the same manner—to make their existence certain. He decreed the existence, the character, the conduct and the state of all moral beings, both in time and eternity. He decreed that some should be the monuments of his goodness, some the monuments of his justice, and some the monuments of his mercy. And he decreed all the means, by which his rational creatures should be brought to their final and eternal condition. In his decrees, which respect all his creatures and all events, God had a supreme regard to his own glory, which is the greatest and best object, that ever can exist. Nothing more and nothing less, than what is now stated, is to be understood by the doctrine of divine decrees.

It is now proposed to show that this doctrine is true. To prove this doctrine I might draw my first argument from the foreknowledge of God. James declares, that "known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." And it is generally al-

lowed, that God foreknows all future events. From this divine foreknowledge, it might be easily demonstrated, that God has decreed all things, that ever have, or ever will come to pass.—I might draw a second argument in favor of the doctrine of divine decrees, from explicit declarations of scripture concerning the purpose of God and the eternal counsel of his own will respecting all his creatures and all their actions. But I will wave the consideration of these arguments and insist only on a third argument, which may be drawn from the infinite wisdom of God.

It is universally granted, that God is a being of infinite wisdom. But no wise being can begin to act, until he has determined what to do. To act without design and without a good design is the very essence of folly. But to act with design and with a good design is the very essence of wisdom.—Hence it follows, that God must have decreed all things, as the foundation of his beginning to act. He must have laid the foundation, before he began to erect the superstructure. And he must have laid the foundation exactly according to the length and breadth and height of the edifice. Or, to speak without a figure, God must have determined in his own mind his whole system of conduct before he began to act. Without such a determination, it was impossible, that his works should be absolutely perfect. If he had

left any one thing undetermined, it might have frustrated his whole design. There are but two reasons, why the works of men are imperfect. One is, that they are too ignorant to form a perfect plan. And the other is, that they are too weak to accomplish the plan they may form. But God can do any thing. He can accomplish any plan he forms, and he can form the best plan, that is possible. Hence, knowing his own power and wisdom, he must have formed the most perfect plan, before he began to operate. His infinite wisdom would not permit him to begin the work of creation, until he had decreed the nature, the number, the use and end of all created objects. The decrees of God must be the foundation of all his works. This is as certain, as it is that he is the only wise God.

But I proceed to my main object, which is to show, that the doctrine of the divine decrees is the fundamental doctrine of the gospel. The other essential doctrines of the gospel are founded upon the doctrine of divine decrees, and are supported by it. To deny or disprove this doctrine would be to deny or disprove the whole gospel. Every system of sentiments has some fundamental principle, without which it cannot exist. The fundamental principle in the Newtonian philosophy is, that no material body has a tendency to move of itself, without an external cause of motion. For

remove this principle and the Newtonian philosophy can be entirely overthrown. The first principle in civil government is, that all men have natural rights, which they ought to enjoy, so far as it is consistent with the general good of society. For remove this principle, and there will remain no foundation of civil government.—The first principle in the scheme of salvation according to the gospel is, that God has decreed all things from eternity. For remove this doctrine, and no doctrine of the gospel can be maintained; for there remains no foundation to support the gospel. The doctrine of divine decrees, therefore, lies at the foundation of the gospel, and supports all its essential doctrines. But I will enter more particularly into this subject and mention a number of the most essential doctrines of the gospel, which wholly depend upon the doctrine of divine decrees.

1. It is a doctrine of the gospel, that God has a moral character, which is perfectly holy and amiable. We read that God is love; that he is good to all; that he is just and gracious. These are moral qualities, which form the most amiable moral character. But we cannot conceive, that these moral perfections should belong to God, unless he has some purposes and designs. Take from God his decrees or intentions, and we cannot conceive, that he should sustain any moral character; and much less a moral character of perfect good-

ness. There can be no goodness without good purposes and designs. And if God has never formed any good purposes, he has never exercised any real holiness, or goodness. Hence, Bolingbroke and other deists, who deny the decrees of God, equally deny his moral perfections. And in this respect they are consistent with themselves. For if God has never formed any purposes, he has never formed a good moral character. The doctrine of divine decrees is, therefore, fundamental to the doctrine of the moral-perfection of God.

2. It is a doctrine of the gospel, that the scriptures were written under divine inspiration. But how could God inspire the sacred writers to record those predictions, which are contained in the Bible, if he had not fore-ordained whatsoever comes to pass? The Bible abounds in predictions of great, distant, and important events.—We find the prediction, that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head; that the old world should be destroyed in a hundred and twenty years; that the seed of Abraham should be strangers in a strange land four hundred years; that the Jews should go into captivity in Babylon for seventy years; that after three score and two weeks Messiah should be cut off, but not for himself; that the Persians should destroy the Babylonians, the Greeks the Persians, and the Romans the Greeks; that Jerusalem

should be totally destroyed, and the Jews scattered among all nations; and that Christ shall reign on earth a thousand years. These and many other great events have been foretold by the prophets, Jesus Christ and the apostles. But God could not inspire them to foretell these events, unless he had decreed, that they should certainly take place. To deny the decrees of God, is, therefore, to deny that the Bible is his word. If God has not decreed all things, it can be demonstrated that the scriptures are a cunningly devised fable.

3. It is an essential doctrine of the gospel, that Christ died on the cross to make an atonement for sin. But there is no truth in this doctrine, unless God decreed to save sinners. For Christ professed to come in the name of his Father, to obey his Father, and to die at the express command of his Father. But if his Father never decreed the salvation of sinners, it is certain that his Father never sent him, and never commanded him to die in the room of sinners; so that Christ is found a false witness. And then, though he died on the cross, his death could make no atonement, and be of no avail to the salvation of sinners. But if he died according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God; if he was obedient to his Father, even unto the death of the cross; then his dying, the just for the unjust, may avail to bring sinners unto God. The truth of

Christ's mission, and the value of his death, depend upon the doctrine of the divine decrees. And the denial of this doctrine is virtually and necessarily the denial of the atonement of Christ and the whole glory of the gospel.

4. It is a doctrine of the gospel, that multitudes, in future time, shall cordially embrace it. Our Lord spake many parables to illustrate the future prevalence of the gospel, and its happy influence upon the hearts of men.— But there cannot be the smallest evidence, that any sinner ever will embrace the gospel without the special grace of God. For all mankind naturally oppose the gospel and reject it, as long as they can. And they can reject it, as long as their carnal mind remains. But there is no evidence, that God will exercise his special grace for the salvation of sinners, if he has not decreed to save any of mankind. But it may be demonstrated, that no impenitent sinner will ever be brought to repentance, if God has not decreed to sanctify any of the human race. The doctrine of regeneration depends upon the doctrine of election, or the divine decrees. To deny this doctrine, amounts to the denial that God ever has renewed, and that he ever will renew one of the depraved children of men. If God has not decreed to renew any person, it can be demonstrated, that no person ever has been, or ever will be renewed. But if God has decreed to save some of the hu-

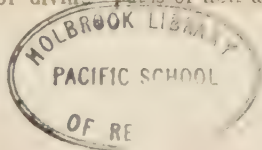
man race, then it may be demonstrated, that he will renew those, whom he has determined to save. Accordingly, the apostle says, "Whom he did predestinate, them he also called." The doctrine of regeneration is therefore founded upon the doctrine of election.

5. It is a doctrine of the gospel, that they, who are renewed, shall certainly persevere in holiness and be conducted to heaven. Unto the saints at Philippi, the apostle says, "He, who hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." They, who are once renewed, shall, according to the gospel, be kept by the mighty power of God unto salvation. But this doctrine of the gospel depends upon the eternal purpose of God to save a certain number of mankind. For if this purpose be denied, it amounts to a denial, that any saint will finally persevere. Without the doctrine of election, it cannot be proved, that God will conduct a single saint to heaven. But it can be demonstrated, that he will not do it. For certainly he will never conduct a saint to heaven, without determining to do it. And it is now too late for a being of infinite wisdom to form any new purpose. But if God has decreed to save a certain number of mankind, through sanctification of the spirit, and belief of the truth, then those, whom he has renewed and caused to believe the truth, he will conduct to the kingdom of heaven. The doctrine of divine

decrees is the only and the complete foundation for the doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints.

6. It is a doctrine of the gospel, that they, who persevere in holiness, shall be completely and forever happy. But the complete and eternal happiness of saints in a future state depends upon the doctrine of divine decrees. If God has not decreed what their state shall be in eternity, it cannot be proved, that the happiness of heaven will not come to a final period. God does not know, nor can any creature know, that saints shall be happy in heaven forever, unless God has decreed it. But if he has decreed that all things in heaven and earth and all worlds, shall work together for good to them that love him and are called according to his purpose, then it can be known, that the joys of heaven will never cease. Hence the certainty of the future and eternal happiness of holy creatures depends entirely upon the doctrine of divine decrees.

7. It is a plain doctrine of the gospel, that they, who die in their sins, shall be finally and eternally lost. But this doctrine depends upon their being ordained to eternal destruction. For if God has not decreed, that the finally impenitent shall be eternally miserable, it cannot be proved, that their punishment shall never cease. Nor does even God himself know but he shall release them from the pains of hell and raise them to the



joys of heaven in some future period. But if they shall be condemned to that everlasting punishment, to which they were appointed from eternity, then it is certain, that their miseries will never end. The doctrine of eternal punishment, therefore, depends upon the doctrine of the divine decrees.

8. The general resurrection is clearly taught in the gospel.— But this doctrine is founded upon the decrees of God. Hymeneus and Philetus denied the general resurrection; and all must deny it, who deny the doctrine of divine decrees. For how can it be proved, that, in some distant period, God will raise all, who are in their graves, to a re-union of soul and body, unless he has decreed to do it? This great doctrine of the gospel depends upon the divine decrees, which alone render it worthy of universal belief.

9. The gospel abundantly teaches us, that all things shall eventually terminate in the glory of God and in the highest good of the universe. But the truth of this doctrine depends upon the decrees of God. For if he has not decreed all things in the universe, and absolutely fixed every event, it cannot be certain, that all things will terminate, either in his glory, or in the highest happiness of moral beings. Indeed, upon this supposition, it is absolutely uncertain how things will terminate. They may, for ought that can be known by God or man, terminate in the

complete and endless misery of the universe. But if God has decreed all things, and made all things for himself; then it is certain, that “of him, and through him, and to him, are all things;” and they shall be to his eternal glory. It is the doctrine of divine decrees, which supports the joyful doctrine, that all things in the universe shall terminate well. I will only add,

10. That it is a duty enjoined upon all men to confide and rejoice in the divine government.— But the decrees of God are the only proper foundation of this duty. It is written “The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of the isles be glad thereof.” But what foundation can there be for this injunction, if God has not determined to govern the universe in the wisest and best manner? If he reigns without law, and without design; if he does not direct all things to his own glory and the greatest good; what just cause have any of mankind to rejoice, that he rules in the armies of heaven, and among the nations of the earth? It is certainly a just cause for mourning rather than rejoicing, that the Lord reigns, unless he has fore-ordained all things to promote his glory, and the highest good of his rational creatures; and, in his universal providence, seeks that great and noble design. But if God has decreed all things for his own glory, and the highest good of the universe, then he is

a worthy object of supreme affection, confidence and delight. Then all his creatures have infinite reason to rejoice, that God reigns and will forever reign. Thus the decrees of God are the foundation of all his works; and the foundation of all the doctrines of the gospel; and the foundation of all the happiness of saints and angels. The whole gospel, and the whole happiness of the universe depend upon the doctrine, that God has, according to the council of his own will, for his own glory, fore-ordained whatsoever comes to pass. This very important and interesting subject, suggests the following remarks.

1. Ministers of the gospel ought, plainly and fully, to preach the doctrine of divine decrees. It is impossible to explain the doctrines and duties of the gospel, without explaining the decrees of God, which are their foundation and support. The doctrine of divine decrees is the light, strength and glory of the whole gospel.—With this doctrine the whole system of divine truth must stand, or fall. This doctrine, then, is to be plainly and fully preached, if ministers would teach their hearers any thing of the gospel in its real design, origin, connections and consequences. It is exceedingly important that preachers and hearers should, in their views and feelings, ascend to the infinite and eternal fountain, from which all the blessings of the gospel flow. This foundation is the purpose of God,

which he purposed in Christ Jesus. If pastors would lead their flocks to the purest and sweetest waters of life, they must in their instructions trace every thing to the decrees of God. In his decrees they will perceive the union of infinite knowledge, wisdom, power and goodness engaged for the accomplishment of the greatest, wisest and best objects. And the knowledge of his decrees will spread a bright and pleasant light over all the dark and painful scenes of earth and time. It will give importance and beauty to the existence of every object and event in the universe. It gives to the gospel a magnitude and sublimity, that extend from eternity to eternity.—If then the ministers of the gospel would promote their own knowledge, holiness and happiness;—the instruction and edification of real christians; and the repentance and salvation of sinners;—they must plainly and fully exhibit the doctrine of divine decrees, which are the eternal and immutable foundation of the whole gospel. This doctrine had the first and highest place in the instructions of the apostle. In his epistle to the saints at Rome, he ascends from stream to stream until he reaches the fountain of divine knowledge, wisdom and goodness in the the eternal purposes of God. And there his spirit rests and triumphs, in the face of every foe. “Whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified.—

And whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" With what enlargement, purity and gratitude of affections does he begin his epistle to the saints at Ephesus? "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace; being predestinated according to the purpose of him, who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." It is when the apostle dwells on the doctrine of the divine decrees, that he appears to comprehend what is the breadth and length and depth and height and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge;—to be filled with all the fulness of God. And now, if the preachers of the gospel would strip error of every deceitful appearance; give their instructions a divine importance and energy; establish the children of God upon the foundation of everlasting consolation and happiness; and destroy every dangerous and destructive refuge of sinners; they must not shun to declare the whole counsel of God. They must plain-

ly and fully exhibit the greatness, the wisdom, and the goodness of the divine decrees; and by the light of those decrees show their hearers, that the whole earth is filled with the glory of God; and that God will be exalted and glorified by every creature and every event in the universe.

2. If the doctrine of divine decrees is the fundamental doctrine of the gospel, then it is easy to understand the gospel. This first principle of the gospel is perfectly simple and plain. The doctrine of God's decrees is as evident, as rational, and as scriptural, as any doctrine, that respects his existence, perfections, agency and blessedness. And certainly there is no other doctrine of the gospel, that is more easily explained and understood than the doctrine of divine decrees. Indeed, while this doctrine is not explained and understood, it is impossible to understand, explain, or even to support any other doctrine of the gospel. But let this doctrine, which is perfectly simple and plain be understood, and it is easy to understand all the other doctrines of divine truth. This doctrine is light itself, and it casts a clear and pleasant light upon the whole gospel, and upon all the works and ways of God. They who cannot understand the gospel upon the foundation of the divine decrees, cannot understand it upon any other foundation; for the gospel has no other foundation.—It is by disregarding, obscuring,

denying and opposing this doctrine, which is the foundation of the gospel, that ignorance of divine subjects has so rapidly increased, and extensively prevailed in this land for a number of years. And by the same means the way has been opened for the increasing and prevailing floods of error, which still rise and spread, and sweep such multitudes, with high hopes of heaven, in the broad way to endless wo and despair. They, who refuse to understand the doctrine of divine decrees, on which the whole gospel rests, cannot possibly understand any of its doctrines, duties, or blessings. But they will be involved in the darkness of ignorance, or be bewildered in the labyrinths of error and deceit. But they, who are in such a state, choose darkness rather than light; for it is easy to understand the gospel, which is wholly founded on the plain and simple fact, that God has, for his own glory, fore-ordained whatsoever comes to pass.

3. Every scheme of religion, which excludes the doctrine of divine decrees, is essentially and fundamentally erroneous. No two schemes of doctrine can be more opposite than these two; one, that includes, and one, that excludes the doctrine of divine decrees. If God has not decreed all things, it is abundantly evident, that the gospel has no foundation. Since the decrees of God are the foundation of the gospel, every

scheme of religion, which excludes and rejects the doctrine of decrees, is fundamentally erroneous and deceitful. If God did not decree all things in the eternal counsel of his own will, there is no reason to believe, that he has ever done any thing. For it is absurd to suppose that he should act without a determination to act. The first cause of all things must have decreed all things. If God has not decreed, he has not caused all things. And if he has not caused all things, what reason is there to believe that he has caused any thing? If he has not caused any thing and every thing, what reason is there to believe that he exists. And if God does not exist, what reason is there to believe that any thing exists? There is no rational and consistent medium between the doctrine of the divine decrees and universal scepticism. If this doctrine be not true, what is true? Let this doctrine be renounced and overthrown, and there remains nothing of any real importance or solidity in the universe. It is written, "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God." And can he be less unwise, who says with his tongue, there is a God; and yet denies the doctrine of his decrees? But who, that has any wisdom and goodness can wish, that this doctrine, which is the very foundation of the gospel, and of the whole glory of the universe, were untrue? Every scheme of doctrine, which excludes the decrees of God, subverts the whole

gospel and strikes at the foundation of rational and revealed religion. And it must be essentially and fundamentally erroneous.

4. They, who reject the doctrine of divine decrees, must, to be consistent, wholly reject the gospel. The decrees of God exactly agree with his character and perfectly exhibit his eternal and infinite greatness and goodness. They, who oppose and reject the decrees of God, oppose and reject his real character. The whole conduct of God, in the wonders of creation, providence and redemption, exactly agrees with his decrees. They, who oppose and reject the decrees of God, oppose and reject his wise, holy and sovereign agency. The decrees of God are his glory, and they who reject his decrees reject his glory. And when the character, conduct and glory of God are rejected, what can be seen of God, either in creation, providence or redemption? It is absurd to suppose, that any thing of the gospel of the grace of God can be supported, when his decrees, which are the foundation of the gospel, are rejected from the system of divine truth. Many persons, and not a small number of professed teachers of divine truth, can trace their declension and apostacy from sound doctrine to the rejection of the doctrine of divine decrees.— Being displeased by this doctrine, they have turned from the infinite holiness and sovereignty of the

living and true God. They have next turned from the divinity, mediation and atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ. They have then rejected the sovereign and special influence of the Holy Spirit in the sanctification of sinners. They have then discarded the essential difference between saints and sinners. They have then denied the doctrine of future and eternal rewards and punishments. They have next discarded the plenary inspiration of the scriptures. And having renounced in reality, if not in profession, the light of divine truth, they have groped at noon-day as in the night; and have groped as though they had no eyes. Now can it be fully and clearly denied, that such persons, as reject the doctrine of divine decrees, act consistently with themselves in their declension and apostacy from every doctrine of the gospel? Having rejected the foundation, how can they support any part of the superstructure? It is utterly impossible for such persons as reject the doctrine of divine decrees, to maintain, systematically and consistently, any doctrine of the gospel.

5. It concerns all persons to attend, seriously and candidly, to the doctrine of divine decrees, in reference to their own character and condition. No person can be indifferent in respect to this subject. It brings God near to us and places us with all our interests in his holy and sovereign hand. Nor is there any thing in the gospel

which is wholly founded on the decrees of God, that can take us from the hand of our holy and sovereign creator. Is it, then, the comfort and joy of our hearts, that God will deal with us and dispose of us forever according to his eternal decrees? Can we perform any duty, can we have any true joy or peace, or life, while our hearts rise against God, "who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will?" Can we imagine that we love the gospel, while we reject and hate the doctrine of divine decrees, which are the eternal and immovable foundation of the whole gospel of the grace of God? Let no one deceive himself; and let no one be deceived by the vain and false notions of such religious professors, and of such professed teachers of the gospel, as oppose and reject the very foundation, on which the whole gospel rests.

PAUL.

ON THE VALUE OF THE SOUL.

That mankind in general consider the soul of but little worth, is evident from their conduct. For they seem to be totally regardless of its interests; while all their thoughts and all their efforts are directed to the pursuit of earthly riches, honors and pleasures—Yet there is reason to conclude, that the human soul, however worthless it may be in the estimation of worldlings, is exceedingly valuable. And to make this appear is the design of the following observations.

1. Something of the value of the soul may be learnt from its nature. The soul is an immaterial, spiritual substance. Though it is mysteriously united to matter, it is neither blended with it, nor resembles any of its properties. The body is divisible, or may be separated into parts. But the soul is indivisible. It is in its own nature an intelligent, percipient, active being; and hence differs essentially from matter, which is wholly destitute of intelligence, thought and activity. In its peculiar properties, the soul faintly resembles its glorious author, who, it is said, "created man in his own image." It is true, that God's moral image, which is holiness, and which he originally impressed upon the soul of man, was obliterated at the fall, when sin took full possession of it. Yet it still retains his natural image, a spark of his intelligence, and continues to be in a high and peculiar sense "his offspring."—Hence the nature of the soul, and its relation and resemblance to the divinity, proclaim its worth. This further appears,

2. From the capacity with which it is endowed. We may rationally conclude from the nature and properties of the soul, as described by its creator, that it is capable of great things. The soul is, indeed, a creature; and therefore is not sufficient of itself to do any thing. It can neither choose, nor love, nor hate, nor think, nor exist, without God, in whom it lives,

and in whom are all its springs.— Yet he has formed it with a capacity for great achievements and acquisitions. His inspiration has given it understanding; and hence it is capable of making progress in knowledge to an extent beyond all the conceptions of created beings. We can only say that the soul being finite, can never become omniscient, can never by searching find out the Almighty unto perfection. The soul is also capable of making continual progress in holiness. That the soul, when pure and holy, was capable of becoming sinful, is proved by the fact, that it did become so:— And that having become sinful, it is capable of becoming holy, is proved by the fact, that it has become so. It possesses the same ability for the exercise of disinterested love and the performance of disinterested actions, that it does for the exercise of selfish love and the performance of selfish actions. It is certain, that the soul is able to make as rapid progress in holiness as in knowledge. Who then can tell how high in holiness it may rise, or how much good it may do? It is likewise capable of the most refined and exalted happiness; that happiness which flows from bright and ravishing views of Jehovah's glory, and from union and communion with him. The more it knows of God, and the more it loves him, the greater will its happiness be. And it is able to increase in the knowledge, love and enjoyment of

this infinite Being, as long as it exists. This being admitted, the value of the soul will be still more apparent, if we consider,

3. Its immortality. The soul, though united to a mortal body, is itself immortal. This, the light of nature does not teach. That boasted light, which the tongue of infidelity never ceases to pronounce sufficient for the instruction and guidance of man, dimly twinkles around him till the close of his earthly course, but sheds not a single ray on the valley of death, and penetrates not the darkness of the grave. The arguments drawn from the nature of the soul, its capacity for improvement and enjoyment, and its dread of annihilation; these and all similar arguments, however plausible, do by no means prove its immortality. For a created spirit is not in its own nature immortal, any more than an animated piece of clay. Indeed, there is nothing in the nature of any created thing, whether matter or mind, that tends to prolong its existence a single moment.— The human soul, like all other creatures, is constantly dependent on the will of God for its continuance in being. No wonder, then, that the wisest of the heathen philosophers wandered in the dark on this momentous subject, and rather wished, than firmly believed, that the soul would survive its separation from the body, and exist in a future state. But although the volume of nature affords no solid evidence of the soul's eter-

nal existence, yet the volume of inspiration furnishes this evidence. The gospel has brought the life and immortality of the soul to light.

Though "the dust shall return to the earth as it was, the spirit shall return unto God who gave it," and shall live forever. Now, if we view the soul in the light of that immortality which God has stamped upon it, we shall perceive, at once, that it surpasses in value all the riches and glories of the material creation. The sun, and moon, and stars shall be extinguished, the earth shall pass away, and time itself expire; but the human soul, surviving this dissolution of worlds, shall pursue its endless course, and contemplate with unutterable joy or unutterable woe the bright and awful scenes of eternity. As none but God, who made and sustains the soul, can have a perfect view of the whole of its immortal existence in the world to come, with all that it will know and do, and all that it will enjoy or suffer there; so none but he can fully comprehend its worth. I add,

4. That all which God has done and is doing for the redemption and salvation of the human soul, proclaims in most impressive language its inestimable value.—What labours have been performed, what sacrifices have been made, what wonders have been wrought, to accomplish his eternal design of redeeming and saving mercy! For this the created universe

was formed, and is sustained and governed from age to age. For this the Lord Jesus Christ descended from heaven to earth, became incarnate, and toiled, and bled, and died. And in a word, for this all things and events in the immense empire of God are brought to pass. The means employed for the accomplishment of this design, are such as have arrested the attention of heaven, earth and hell, and astonished the universe. It is true, that God's last end in all these operations is his own glory, which is infinitely the highest and most valuable end that either he or any other beings can pursue. But a subordinate, though unspeakably important end, is the redemption and salvation of the church, which is composed of human beings. Hence, in an important sense, all that God has done and will do from the beginning to the end of time, is designed for the redemption of the soul of man. Now would God preserve the frame of nature, would he cause the orbs of heaven to shine, would he bid the wheels of providence roll on for thousands of years, and would he give his Son to die on the cross, for the redemption of the soul, if the soul itself were of little worth? It cannot be. These marvellous works, whose magnitude and grandeur absorb and overwhelm all the faculties of the soul for whose redemption they are wrought, are full demonstration of its transcendent value, since they show in what

high estimation it is held by its creator.

1. How great is the loss which those must sustain who lose their souls! The loss of a thing is great in proportion to its value.—The incomparable value of the soul, therefore, proves that the loss of it must be unspeakably great. To lose the soul, is to be shut out of heaven, is to lose all that exceeding and eternal weight of glory and blessedness, with which the righteous are crowned. To lose the soul, is to be shut up in the prison of despair, is to share in the endless blasphemies, and wailings, and torments of the damned. How extremely foolish, then, as well as criminal, are those who pursue a course which tends to destroy their precious souls! This is done by many more persons than is generally imagined. All men come into the world in a state of ruin—they come into the world sinners. And sin is the moral debasement and ruin of the soul. Sin has despoiled it of all its spiritual beauty and excellence, and rendered it deformed and hateful. And there are multitudes whose conduct tends to destroy it forever. All the openly vicious are certainly doing what they can to drown their souls in destruction and perdition. This number, is by no means small. It would be well, however, if none were sealing the ruin of their immortal souls, but such as walk in the polluted paths of vice. But it is a solemn truth, that very many

are doing this, who, in their own view and in the view of others, are moral and virtuous characters. Such are all those who toil to amass earthly riches, rather than to become rich towards God. Such are all those who seek the honors of the world, rather than the honor that cometh from God only. Such are all those who pursue the pleasures of time and sense, rather than the pure and imperishable pleasures which are found at God's right hand. And such, in short, are all who live impenitent, faithless, disobedient lives. The whole work of such as hate God, and Christ, and truth, and holiness, is the work of self-destruction. And what an immense majority of mankind this class includes! How vast the number, who, while they are solicitous to pamper and adorn their mortal bodies, which must soon be food for worms, neglect to adorn their immortal souls with the robes of righteousness, and the garments of salvation! Wisdom does indeed point out to the children of men, a path of pleasantness and peace, and bids them walk in it. But how few of them ever listen to wisdom's voice! How few of them ever travel in this radiant path, which opens into the splendours of eternal day! The throng voluntarily pursue the way of sin, of darkness, and of destruction, until death comes, and shuts up the gloomy scene forever. Can any thing equal their temerity and folly?

2. If souls are precious as we have seen, it fully justifies all the exertions and sacrifices that any have ever made to enlighten, reclaim and save them. This conclusion plainly follows, not only from the value of the soul itself, but also from the revenue of glory which its salvation brings to God. Numbers of mankind have from age to age made some efforts, and been at some expense, to save the souls of their fellow-creatures. But had they done a thousand fold more than they have, they would have been fully justified in it. Indeed, all that men have done, are doing, or will do to the end of time by way of means, would not transcend, or even *equal* the importance of the object, though the result of all their combined and protracted labours were only the conversion and salvation of a single soul.—For one soul is worth more than ten thousand worlds; and the glory of God in its salvation is of more value than all the intelligent and immortal beings that he has created. This labor of love, O how far does it excel, in magnitude and importance, all those works which worldlings prosecute with so much ardor, and make such costly sacrifices to accomplish! Time in its progress will corrode and destroy all their works, or the flames of the last day will burn them up forever. But those who engage in this work of God and of souls, are assisting to raise a monument to the praise of his glory, which will

stand to eternity the joy and wonder of all holy creatures. Surely then, there is no danger of doing too much in a cause like this.

Finally. Let such as have hitherto neglected the concerns of their souls, be persuaded to neglect them no longer. It is both the duty and the interest of every person to seek the salvation of his own soul. Do any ask what it is to do this? To become reconciled to God, to love him supremely, to submit to him unconditionally, and to live to his glory—this is to seek the salvation of the soul; for God is its life, its salvation, and its blessedness. They who deny themselves, they who exercise disinterested love, they who make the glory of God their last end, do truly desire and seek, and will certainly obtain, the salvation of their souls. They will lift up their heads with joy in that day when all who love and seek their own interest supremely, will call in vain to the rocks and mountains to hide them from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.

THEOPHILUS.

THE DUTY OF FASTING EXPLAINED.

Customs, which have been handed down from our fathers, and which from our childhood we have regarded, are less frequently made the subjects of our critical examination, than those which have had their origin in our own day.—

Many in this land, who have long been in the habit of observing days of fasting and prayer, when recommended by their rulers, have, it is presumed, seldom or never seriously considered the nature and importance of this ancient practice. That fasting is a duty, I shall, take for granted.— But with a view to excite attention to this important subject, and to correct some erroneous apprehensions respecting it, I shall here attempt to show how we ought to fast.

It can hardly be necessary to observe, in the first place, that in fasting we ought to abstain from our customary indulgence in eating and drinking. This abstinence is implied in the signification of the word *fast*. There can be no fasting without it. We may read, and meditate, and pray, but we cannot *fast*, without abstaining, to a certain degree, from our customary indulgence in food and drink.— The particular degree, to which this abstinence ought to be carried, must depend, in some measure, upon the circumstances in which we are placed. So much food and drink, as is essential to the preservation of health, ought, I apprehend, always to be taken. But on days of fasting, no more than what appears absolutely necessary for this purpose, should be received. That indulgence of the appetite which, on other occasions, is lawful, and which, as a general thing, is conducive to health and comfort, should on days of fasting

be foreborne. Fasting is voluntary self-denial, even in lawful indulgences. The design of it is to mortify the body, as a token of our ill-desert, as an expression of that self-abasement of soul, which we feel in view of our sins. In all the descriptions of fasting, which we have in the scriptures, voluntary abstinence from food makes a part. If any one is disposed to doubt the necessity, or even the propriety of this abstinence, let him consider, that the Lord knows best what is necessary and proper for his creatures, and as fasting, implying abstinence from food and drink for a limited time, is an appointment of his, sanctioned not only by his express command, but by the example of his most devoted servants in every age, we ought not rashly to deny its propriety and importance, even if we could not readily perceive them. Let him also consider, that the common sense of mankind is in favor of expressing the feelings of the heart by some significant and appropriate external act. The practice of rising, when we call on the name of the Lord, is generally considered as highly proper, on the ground that there ought to be some external token of the reverence which is felt for his character. It has always been considered proper for individuals, when bereaved of their friends to *express* their sorrow, by some external token. Hence we see badges of mourning. The afflicted lay aside their garments, the bright-

ness of whose colors are indicative of joy and gladness, and as an expression of their grief, clothe themselves in black. By the common consent of mankind, feasting is considered as one proper expression of gratitude and joy.—Accordingly on days of Thanksgiving, more indulgence in the good things, with which a kind providence has blessed us, is considered proper, than is allowable every day. Now, if it is proper that we should *rise*, when we attempt to address the Most High, as a token of our reverence for his Majesty ; if we may, with propriety, wear a badge of mourning, as an expression of our sorrow for the dead ; if as an indication of our joy and gratitude, we may on days of Thanksgiving partake of the bounties which a gracious providence has conferred upon us, ought we not, on the same principles, to express, by some significant external act, the self-abasement which we feel, when humbling ourselves before God for our sins ? And of what more proper expression of this can we conceive, than a voluntary abstinence from the blessings, which by our sins we have forfeited ? This is an external act, peculiarly well suited to the nature of true contrition. It is an act which strikingly manifests the ill-desert of sin, and publicly acknowledges the justice of God in punishing it. It is an external act well calculated to affect our hearts, and to give us a

lasting impression of our guilt and unworthiness.

2. We should fast under a deep sense of our sinfulness and guilt. As it is on account of our sins that we fast, to be destitute of a feeling sense of them, is inwardly to contradict what we outwardly profess. On days of fasting, therefore, it should be a part, and no small part of our business, to consider our ways. The sins of our hearts, the sins of our tongues, and all our external offences should be called to mind, and viewed in the light of the divine law. We should consider the greatness of the love which we have abused, the high authority which we have disregarded, and the numerous evil consequences of our sins both to ourselves and others. While fasting under a solemn consideration of these things, we should

3. Truly *repent* of all our sins. Their odious nature, as committed against a God of love, and their destructive consequences to ourselves and others, should lead us “to abhor ourselves” on account of them, and to “repent in dust and ashes.” To pretend to fast for sin, without repenting of it, is hypocrisy. Fasting is an external act, denoting, if it has any meaning, an humble and a contrite heart. If, therefore, this humble and contrite heart, of which fasting is only an external token, be wanting, of what use or significance is fasting ? It is hypocrisy. It can neither be acceptable to

God, nor serviceable to man. To this mere external fasting where there is nothing in the heart to correspond with it, our Saviour has reference when he says, "Moreover when ye fast be not as the hypocrites of a sad countenance; for they disfigure their faces that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head and wash thy face, that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly." In these words, our Saviour does not intend to condemn a sober countenance, or any other proper expression of humility, when it is accompanied with the reality; but merely that affected contrition, which led the hypocrites to disfigure their faces, while in the sight of God, they were destitute of true repentance.

4. Fasting should be accompanied, not only with true repentance, but with those external duties which are "fruits meet for repentance." Fasting, as we have seen, is a token of repentance.—But this is by no means an infallible indication of the reality. It is to be considered as evidence of true repentance, only when it is accompanied, or followed, with such an external reformation, as corresponds with the nature of true repentance. Those who have been guilty of injustice, cru-

elty, fraud, or oppression—those who have shut up their bowels of compassion against the poor, while they have seen them famishing with hunger, and suffering with nakedness, at their doors, must, if they would fast acceptably to God, not only feel the emotions of contrition in their hearts, but actually reform their lives. They must perform the external duties which they have neglected, and, as far as is in their power, make amends for the injuries which their sins have done. That their fasting, without this reformation, is an abomination in the sight of God, may be seen by a moment's attention to his own words. "Is it such a fast that I have chosen? A day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head like a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord? Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke. Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? When thou seest the naked that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh. Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; and the glory of the Lord shall be thy rear-ward. Then shalt thou

call and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, *Here I am.*

5. Fasting should always be accompanied with prayer. It is the nature of that self-abasement and deep contrition, of which fasting is an external token, to vent itself in fervent prayer to God. Accordingly we find, that in the scriptures fasting and prayer are uniformly spoken of in connexion with each other. David not only fasted and wept, when his child was smitten of the Lord, but he fervently prayed for its recovery. When Paul and Barnabas were to be separated to the work of the ministry, among the Heathens, the apostles both fasted and prayed before they laid their hands upon them. Whenever there is an occasion for fasting, there is also an occasion for praying. Modern christians as well as holy men of old, always accompany their fastings with prayers. We need no other evidence, that mankind do not fast acceptably to God, than a knowledge that they do not pray.—A.

SERMONS—No. III.

PRAYER FOR THE INCREASE OF FAITH.

LUKE, XVII. 5.—*Increase our faith.*

Ever since mankind became enemies to God, they have been at enmity among themselves. And they have not failed to manifest their mutual enmity by mutual in-

juries. Destruction and misery have been in their way; and the way of peace have they not known. And so long as total depravity generally prevails in the world, every one, who lives in it, has reason to expect, that he shall frequently give and receive offences. This painful truth our Savior plainly taught his followers, in the beginning of the chapter, which contains our text.—“Then said he unto his disciples, it is impossible but that offences will come; but wo unto him through whom they come!” Christ then subjoins another admonition, no less necessary and important. “Take heed to yourselves; if thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.” From these words it is evident, that christians should forgive an offending brother, as often as he manifests real repentance. But the disciples were so sensible of their moral imperfection, that this duty of forgiveness appeared extremely difficult. They, therefore, said unto the Lord, *Increase our faith.* These words place before us the following sentiment—Believers ought to pray for the increase of faith.

In our attention to this subject, it is proposed,

I. To consider what is implied in their praying for the increase of faith; and,

II. To inquire why they ought to pray for the increase of this grace.

I. It is proposed to consider what the prayer of believers for the increase of faith implies.—Faith, in the first instance, is the gift of God. The apostle says to christians, “by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.” As it belongs to God to produce faith, so it belongs to him to increase it. For this reason believers ought to pray to God to continue and increase their faith. Faith, as well as every other christian grace, is the fruit of the Spirit. Christians, therefore, ought to realize and acknowledge their dependance upon God for the increase of faith. But the question now is, what do they mean, when they pray, that their faith may be increased?

1. This implies, that their faith may become more clear and distinct. It is written—“Faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.” In the exercise of faith believers look not at the things, that are seen, which are temporal; but at the things, that are not seen, which are eternal. Faith respects future, distant, eternal and invisible objects, which christians often view with a great degree of obscurity and indistinctness. When they contemplate upon the existence and perfections of God, his original and eternal designs, his operations in creation, providence

and redemption, they find it extremely difficult to form clear and distinct conceptions of these invisible and glorious objects. When they carry their thoughts into the world of spirits and contemplate upon the Lord Jesus Christ in his present exaltation, and upon the objects, employments and enjoyments of heaven, clouds and darkness rest upon their minds.—Though they really believe the existence of those things, which are not seen and which are eternal, yet their faith is no more clear and distinct than the objects of it. This darkness and deficiency of faith often gives christians pain and distress, and makes them ardently pray for a more clear and distinct faith of future and eternal realities. And the more clear and distinct their perception of these objects may be at any time, the more they desire to see them with increasing clearness; and the more fervently do they pray for the increase of their faith. Faith is always increased in proportion to the clearness, with which believers discern divine objects. God is able to increase their faith in this respect and give them a clearer and clearer discernment of the invisible things of the invisible world.

2. The prayer of believers for the increase of their faith implies a desire, that their faith may be stronger as well as clearer. The clearness and strength of faith are intimately connected; though really distinct. The strength of

faith chiefly depends upon the impression, which divine objects make on the affections of believers. A man may have a clear and distinct idea of death, without any deep sense of its nature and effects. So a believer may have a clear and distinct perception of the objects of faith, without a deep sense of their nature and importance. A strong faith arises from a deep and lively impression of the reality, importance and nearness of those things, which are future, eternal and invisible. It was such a sense of the being, power and faithfulness of God, that strengthened the faith of the father of the faithful. "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God." Moses was strong in faith, when he left Egypt, because he had a deep and lively impression of the existence, perfections, purposes and promises of God. Therefore, "he endured, as seeing him, who is invisible." While the ancient patriarchs were pilgrims and strangers on the earth, God gave them a strong faith by making future things present, and invisible things visible.—The faith of believers is always weak, when they do not have a deep sense of the being, presence, purposes and faithfulness of God. But when God gives them a spiritual discernment of spiritual objects, and brings himself near to them, and brings them near to him; then he increases the strength of their faith. And this is one

thing they desire, when they pray for the increase of faith. Besides,

3. Their praying for the increase of faith, implies a desire, that their faith may be more constant, as well as clearer and stronger. They often feel and lament the inconstancy of their faith.—They very frequently lose a clear sight and deep sense of divine things, and become very heartless and faithless. This was the case of Peter, when he attempted to walk upon the water, and when he forsook and denied his master. And Christ often rebuked his disciples for their want of faith.—Real believers are more exposed to the inconstancy of faith, than of any other christian grace. Things that are visible and temporal, almost continually interrupt their faith. Though they have seasons of strong and lively faith, yet these seasons are usually of short duration, and succeeded by long intervals of stupidity and unbelief.—They, therefore, ardently desire, that their faith may become more constant. They desire to live in the continued exercise of a lively faith, and to enjoy a constant sense of heavenly and divine things. In this respect they find a great need of the increase of faith; and they have strong desires, that God would graciously cause that their faith should not fail. Could they only have constantly that degree of faith, which they sometimes exercise, they would think themselves extremely happy. It is, therefore, one of their most sin-

cere and ardent petitions, that God would increase the constancy, as well as the clearness and strength of their faith. It is now proposed,

II. To inquire why believers ought to pray for such an increase of faith. And here I would observe, *in the first place*, that they ought to pray for the increase of faith, because it is in its own nature desirable. A clear, strong, and constant faith, affords believers peculiar satisfaction and enjoyment. They never enjoy God so sensibly, as they do in the strong and lively exercise of faith. It is often said, in the scriptures, that the just shall live by faith. And it appears from the catalogue of worthies, which are mentioned in the eleventh chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews, that the most eminent saints in ancient times found great delight by the exercise of faith in the being, perfections, purposes and promises of God. While they were passing through the dark and trying scenes of life, the faith of future and eternal blessings, beyond the grave, gave them great support and comfort. And the apostles and primitive christians derived great peace and joy from the objects of faith. Nor will faith ever lose its efficacy in this world ; but christians will always find peculiar benefit from the sensible exercise of this divine grace. Hence they ought to pray, that God would strengthen and enlarge their faith, which is so necessary to their comfort and happiness. But, *in the second*

place, they ought to pay for the increase of faith, especially, because its increase will increase every other christian grace. Here it may be useful, particularly, to illustrate the influence of faith upon all other holy exercises and affections.

1. The increase of faith will make believers increase in love to God and man. This the apostles knew would be the fruit of faith ; and therefore they prayed, that God would increase it. While believers have the lively exercise of faith in God and divine objects, they never fail to have their hearts turned, with ardent affections, towards God and Christ and all his friends and all his enemies. When they view all things with an eye of faith, they feel attached to the glory of God and the good of the universe and the happiness of their fellow-creatures, whether saints or sinners, whether friends or foes.— Faith works by love ; and love by faith. Love produces faith ; and faith produces love. Saints never feel more of the spirit of heaven, than while they are in the exercise of a strong and lively faith of invisible and eternal realities, and have a deep sense of the glory of God and of the perfect holiness and happiness of heaven.

2. The more the faith of believers increases, the more they will exercise true repentance and godly sorrow for sin. When Job beheld God with a strong and lively faith, his heart melted into un-

feigned repentance and self-abasement. He said unto God, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee ; wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." A strong and lively faith had the same effect upon the heart of Isaiah.— When by faith he saw God on the throne of glory and heard the praises of the heavenly hosts, he cried, "Wo is me ; for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips." For mine eyes have seen the king, the Lord of host." It is in the exercise of a clear and strong faith, that believers feel the greatest self abhorrence for hating, and opposing and disobeying God, the greatest and best of beings. They, then, blush to raise their face before him, and cry with the penitent publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

3. Faith produces submission to God under all afflictions and trials. While believers view the hand and heart of God in the evils they suffer, they never fail to feel a quiet and submissive spirit. Hence David said, "I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it." And it was in the exercise of faith, that Job felt and expressed such extraordinary submission and patience under his numerous and heavy afflictions. "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away ; blessed be the name of the Lord." In the lively faith of future things the primitive christians

said, "We reckon, that the sufferings of the present time, are not worthy to be compared with the glory, which shall be revealed in us." Faith always increases and strengthens patience.

4. As believers increase in faith, they rise in hope. Hope rests upon faith and cannot exist without it. It is only in faith of future good, that christians can exercise that hope, which is an anchor to their souls, both sure and steadfast, entering into that within the veil. Faith nourishes, increases and strengthens that hope, which is the source of the greatest comfort and joy to christians in the present state. They know, by sensible experience, that the increase of faith will always be followed with the increase of hope.

5. True christian zeal for the glory of God and the interests of his kingdom is the genuine effect of a strong and lively faith. As christians grow in faith, they always, grow in zeal. While christians exercise a strong and constant faith in the promises of God respecting the prosperity of Zion, the extension of the gospel, the prevalence of piety and the salvation of sinners, they always feel a pure and fervent zeal to exert their power and influence to promote the cause of Christ and the interests of his kingdom. I might proceed to observe, that faith promotes self-denial, weanedness from the world, communion with God and every devout and heavenly affection. But enough

has been said to show, that believers ought to pray that their faith may be increased, because it serves to nourish and strengthen every other christian grace. Were christians only to live in the constant and lively exercise of faith, they would abound in the fruits of holiness and shine in all the graces and virtues of the Holy Spirit.— It is, therefore, their duty to pray for the increase of faith, as the first and greatest blessing they can receive from God.

IMPROVEMENT.

1. If all believers ought to pray for the increase of faith, then the best of saints are deficient in this grace. The greatest imperfection in the best of saints is their unbelief. Unbelief consists in the disregard and disbelief of divine truth. Satan deceived and destroyed the common parents of the human family, by producing in their minds a disbelief of what God had declared and threatened.— And in the same way, he blinds, tempts and destroys their apostate children. Even pious persons, who have been turned from satan unto God through the knowledge and belief of the truth, are constantly liable to fall into sin, darkness and sorrow through want of faith. Through an evil heart of unbelief the most eminent servants of God have turned from him and fallen into their greatest offences. Abraham, the father of the faithful and the friend of God, when he was in Egypt and when

he was in the kingdom of Abimelech, showed the greatness of his imperfection by the weakness of his faith. In the same way Jacob failed, though he had, through his life, constantly experienced the truth, mercy and faithfulness of God. Under his trials, he exclaimed, “all these things are against me.” In the same way Job failed and lost sight of God. Elijah also, through unbelief, fell into despondence in respect to the interests of religion. Through want of faith “Zion said, the Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me.” Through unbelief Peter denied his master, Thomas questioned his resurrection, and all the disciples most frequently showed their imperfection. It is through their want of faith that satan, the father of lies, gains his greatest advantage against the church and children of God. This is the weak side of saints. Through their disbelief and disregard of divine truth they turn from God in their hearts and lose a sight and sense of his presence and glory. And then they are involved in darkness and fall into sin and trouble. The Lord Jesus Christ has constant occasion to say to his disciples, “O fools! and slow of heart to believe!”

2. If believers ought to pray for the increase of faith, then they ought to realize their need of it. Their unbelief ought to be a great burden to their hearts. They ought to know and see, that it is an evil thing and bitter, that they

do, so greatly and frequently, forsake the Lord their God, and withdraw from him their supreme affection and confidence. It prevents their obedience, usefulness and comfort. It hinders their progress in knowledge and grace. It is a great abuse of the special grace of God. He has made them believers and given them the light and joy of faith, which they ought never to lose. They ought to feel, that they render themselves as criminal, as they are unhappy, by an evil heart of unbelief.— Their unbelief is far more criminal than the unbelief of impenitent sinners. They ought to be ashamed and confounded, that they do, through a false and faithless heart, depart from the living God. Dr. Hopkins, who has left one of the brightest examples of true faith, that has appeared in modern times, deeply lamented his stupidity, senselessness and unbelief in respect to divine things. He says, “I have been conscious of my great and shameful stupidity and want of a proper sense of the things of God. This, which is more or less sensibly felt, is my constant attendant and the grief and burden of my heart, and matter of my constant confessions and prayer to God for deliverance from it; being always sensibly convinced, that no external light and advantages, or any means used, will in the least remove the stupidity and hardness of heart; but that the Spirit of God alone can remove it and give me that spirit-

ual sensibility and feeling of heart, which I seem most earnestly to desire. I consider this stupidity, blindness and insensibility of heart to divine things, to be altogether and infinitely criminal, as it must be owing to the moral corruption and depravity of my heart, or rather consists wholly in depravity and wickedness of heart, being hardened, contracted and bound up in selfishness and pride, and all the evil propensities which are implied in these. This is *unbelief of heart*, which is consistent with a conviction of the reason and judgment, of the truths contained in the gospel; for no degree of such conviction will in the least remove this blindness, hardness and *unbelief of heart*.”*

3. If believers ought to pray for the increase of faith, then their neglect to pray for it is decisive evidence of spiritual declension.— While, through faith, they advance in religion, their attention and their affections are fixed upon God and upon the riches and glory of his grace in Christ Jesus. In view of God, they perceive the necessity and importance of constant progress in the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit. And they perceive the inducements and encouragements to pray always with all prayer, and desire and resolve to give themselves to this important duty. It is only by humble, fervent and constant prayer; that believers can maintain

* Life of Hopkins, p, 121.

such a sight and sense of divine objects, as are necessary to their spiritual prosperity. Their life and strength are not in themselves, but in God. And it is only by faith, that they can receive from God those supplies of divine grace, which are essential to their progress in religion. Without the spirit of watchfulness and prayer their faith will languish and decline. Whenever believers neglect to pray for the increase of faith, it is certain that their hearts have turned from God, and they have declined in respect to all the graces, duties and enjoyments of religion. The more faith believers have, the more they desire the increase of it. But the less they have, the less they desire the increase of faith and every other christian grace. If saints cease to pray for the increase of faith, they have lost a clear sight and deep sense of divine things. They have erred from the ways of God and hardened their hearts from his fear.

4. If believers ought to pray for the increase of faith, which has such a powerful and happy influence over all other holy affections, then they may discover the beginning of their spiritual declensions. They are conscious of great changes in their views, feelings and enjoyments. Sometimes divine objects appear to be evident and substantial realities; and the vain and transient objects of this world appear to be "vanity of vanities." At other times world-

ly objects arise and fill their minds, engross their hearts and exclude divine things. And frequently believers remain for a long time, in a dark, stupid and lifeless state. But they do not easily learn how they begin to decline, and fall into such darkness and deadness. The beginning of spiritual declension in believers is always in their hearts and consists in unbelief. It is always through an evil heart of unbelief, that they depart from the living God. "It is by faith, that spiritual mercies are received. If the christian backslides and ceases to go and receive, there is an immediate interruption of holy exercise; the sight of God's glory is departed; the sense of his gracious presence is lost; and the heart, being left alone, is weak, comfortless and wretched by the temptations of the world. All this happens from an interruption of faith, which receives spiritual life and strength from God. When the channel of receiving is stopped, the sanctifying, enlightening and comforting power of God ceases to flow into the soul. The life of a christian is derived. It flows forth from his Savior God, and his faith receives the gracious assistance. This faith is that seeking, which finds; that knocking, to which entrance is given. Experience witnesses the truth of this description. While a believer feels his dependance and goes to God for life and strength; while he is willing that God should have the glory of giv-

ing, he feels grace by a divine energy flow into his soul. He can say, God is my helper and my strength. Unworthy as I am, I feel a divine breathing into this polluted temple, and my soul ascends in adoration and praise.— Perhaps, faith never applies in this way, without some sensible return of communicated grace from the Redeemer, who is the way and the life of his people.”* As it is only by faith that believers receive life, strength and joy from God, their declensions always begin and continue through unbelief. Unbelief of heart leads to all manner of negligence, declension and temptation. When believers, through an evil heart of unbelief, depart from God, they become hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, and are liable to fall into every iniquity and transgression.

5. If believers ought to pray for the increase of faith, then they ought constantly to attend to all the means of faith. These means are designed and suited to bring and keep the objects of faith before their minds. Spiritual meditation is of primary and peculiar

importance in respect to the life and increase of faith. This duty keeps the heart in a proper state to discharge all the duties and receive all the blessings of the christian life. The teachable and prayerful reading of the holy scriptures has a powerful tendency to increase the faith of christians.— The secret, private, and public worship of God produces the same happy effect. The devout observance of the sabbath, the preaching of the gospel, and attendance on divine ordinances, serve to excite and maintain the holy affections of believers, and to increase their knowledge and faith. On all these means of faith, christians ought, cheerfully, gratefully and constantly to attend, that they may preserve a clear sight and deep sense of divine things; and may with increasing holiness, comfort and joy, live and walk with God. But these means, without his powerful and special influence, will have no proper effect upon their hearts. They ought, therefore, always to pray unto God—*Increase our faith.*

* Strong's Sermons, vol. i. p. 201.

EXTRACTS.

CONVERSION OF MRS. A.

The Spirit of God, I am now sensible, has been striving with me from my childhood. Many have been my checks of conscience, and fears of hell. But I

often stifled them. When I was married, and came to live with Mr. A. I found myself much tried with the sentiments, which were preached in this place. The doctrines of election, decrees, and

divine sovereignty, were to me very disagreeable. But after a while I resolved to throw these things from my mind, and care no more about them. For such was my situation, that I knew it would be much against my interest, and reputation, to be found an opposer of such preaching. Upon this my feelings became very secure; and I was wholly taken up with the things of this life. I was greatly desirous of obtaining property; and could not endure the thought of being poor. Often when I saw the prosperity of others, and that their situation was more affluent than mine, my heart would rise against God, as though he were a partial being, a hard master. And I often felt disheartened and discouraged.

On a Sabbath, Nov. 30, 1801, God was pleased to call my attention to eternal things. I was reading the parable of the rich man, Luke 13. The words, "But God said to him, Thou fool; this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be that thou hast prepared?"—took fast hold of my mind. I looked with amazement on my past life. I queried, what worldly interest would profit me, if my soul must be lost? I went to meeting with a heavy heart. The subject of the preacher was, the merchantman seeking goodly pearls, finding one of great price, and selling all his other property to buy it. The reading of the text much affected me. I felt that I was indeed un-

done, unless I could obtain that pearl. And how to obtain it, I knew not. I felt myself condemned; and thought I was going to eternal ruin. The sermon deepened my distressing impressions; and they continued for some time. But being much taken up in company, my distress of mind abated, and my convictions left me; though I had intervals of terror.

On Lord's day, March 1, 1802, I was reading a funeral sermon of a minister. The preacher spake of the meeting, which ministers and their people must have before the bar of Christ, what an account must there be given of all sermons, and of praying opportunities; and that companions, parents and children must there have a most solemn meeting. The words were set home upon my heart. I was greatly shocked. I reflected how many sermons I had heard; and to how little effect. How many prayers I had reason to believe had been made to God for me.—How highly I was exalted in privileges; and what wretched improvement I had made. When people came home from meeting, I endeavoured to conceal my feelings, but I could not. When some came into the room, I thought they would rise in judgment against me at the great day. I knew not what to do. I tried to read my Bible; but it all condemned me. Great enmity now rose in my heart against God, and his law. I could not endure the thought of being in his hands,

and of being disposed of as he should please. I was disposed to seek relief from the thought, that there is nothing in religion; or that all men will be saved. But my conscience testified against these expedients. I felt the presence and terrible majesty of God. I saw that I was in his hands; depended on him for every thing; and had got to stand before him in judgment. The thought was insupportable. I saw that God was a sovereign, and would have mercy on whom he would have mercy; and would dispose of me as he pleased. I imagined to myself, that he was the most tyrannical Being; and had placed me in a situation to be eternally miserable. At times I labored to do something to recommend myself to God. But here I could obtain no relief. For I saw that my heart was utterly perverse; and for my best performances I felt condemned.—I felt that I was an undone creature. What to do, or attempt, I knew not. But I fought against God with all my might.

One day as I was walking the room in anguish, I saw a man coming in, with a grave-cloth under his arm. I concluded some person was dead. I queried with myself, what must have been my situation, had I thus been called away! I was so shocked with the thought, that my strength failed me; and I dropt into a chair in silent astonishment. My load of guilt and wretchedness seemed insupportable. The next day was

the sabbath. I attended meeting, and heard a sermon from these words, "Lord save me; I perish." On hearing the text, I felt glad, and hoped I should now hear something, that would afford relief.—But O, my disappointment! Every thing that was said was against me, and seemed to conspire to cut me off. In the afternoon, the minister being called away to attend a funeral, at a distance, our deacons led in the meeting. One of them read Flavel's Husbandry spiritualized. The author spake upon pruning orchards, and cutting down the trees, which cumbered the ground. This I saw was my case. I felt myself to be a cumberer of the earth; and thought I should not be suffered to live. Such was my view of my wicked heart, and of my just condemnation, that I felt myself ripe for destruction. Coming home from meeting, and feeling my heart wrangling against the book which had been read, I asked the deacon, as he passed by with it under the arm, to lend that book to me. The fact was, I wanted to read it myself, in hopes of finding it less terrible to me. He looked me in the face, and said he was glad to have me take it. I felt mortified, and was sorry I had asked for it. I read the pages, which I had heard at meeting. But I was so far from finding relief, that I was the more wounded and distressed.

I kept my troubles as much as possible to myself. I had said

nothing concerning them to Mr. A. For I well knew his strict evangelical sentiments, and what he would say to me. This I had no desire to hear. He had often attempted to converse with me; and I had as often evaded it. For I was utterly unwilling to make that surrender of myself to God, which I well knew he would press upon me.

At night I retired to bed, but I could not sleep. My anguish increased, till I thought I must speedily die. I could refrain no longer. I asked Mr. A. if he was awake? I found he was. I told him I was in great distress of mind, and I thought I must soon die under it. He replied that he had long perceived my trouble, and had tried to introduce conversation with me; but finding me utterly unwilling to converse with him on the subject, he had refrained. He then conversed freely with me, and clearly described my state, my duty and only ground of hope. But the opposition of my heart rose violently against the truths urged upon me. I replied that I could not feel reconciled to God, unless he would save my children and friends, as well as myself. He told me this feeling was unreasonable and wicked; that my will must be bowed and made submissive to the will of God; I must unconditionally embrace Jesus Christ, or be unavoidably miserable. I then begged of him to say no more, and go to sleep; for I could hear no more

of this. My enmity against God and all religion, at that time, was inexpressible. I lay and thought upon my dreadful case. I felt myself to be in the immediate presence of the Almighty God;—that he looked me through and through;—and I felt I was justly condemned to be forever miserable. I would have fain fled out of God's hands; but I was infinitely unable. It tortured my soul to think I must be disposed of at his sovereign will. I rose from my bed, and desired Mr. A. to pray with me. He did. But alas, such was the bitterness of my heart, that I could not unite with him in prayer. My distress increased, till I thought I was actually going to die, and sink into eternal despair.

I now saw and felt that God had a perfect right to do with me as he pleased. And I was willing to give myself up into his hands, that he should dispose of me for time and eternity, as he should see fit. The following words slipped from my cheerful tongue, *I am willing to be in the hands of God, as clay in the hands of the potter!* My distress was gone. I fainted, and for some time lost my senses. When I came to myself, I found myself upon the bed, and in a most calm and peaceful state of mind. All my opposition and trouble seemed to be gone. I knew not the cause. I had no idea of having been made a subject of renewing grace.—The thought turned in my mind, that I had lost all my convictions.

This something alarmed me. But I felt delighted with the character of God. Christ appeared just such a Savior as I needed, and altogether lovely. I felt a satisfaction in giving up myself into his hands, to be disposed of as should be for his glory.

Reflecting on my feelings and comparing them with the word of God, I began to admit of a hope that I had passed from death unto life. I hope my heart is reconciled to God. And truly I am convinced that the salvation of lost man is wholly of the Lord, and according to his own sovereign will; and not for any thing in the creature.

I now desire to own my glorious Savior before men; to walk in the order of his kingdom; and to partake of the rich benefits of his gracious ordinances.

THE HABIT OF MAKING EXCUSES.

There are certain faults of a minor kind, which, by their frequent recurrence, poison the mind more deeply than some others of a more alarming nature, and therefore well deserve our attention. On one of these, *the habit of making excuses*, I shall take the liberty of offering a few remarks. This practice is the refuge of weakness or of sin. So prone is man to error and to transgression, and so much is it incumbent upon him ingenuously to confess his faults or his mistakes, that when the

making of excuses becomes a habit, it cannot be characterised in lighter terms. A false excuse is evidently a sin; a flimsy excuse is as plainly folly; and to suppose that others will be satisfied with it, or that it will raise us in their estimation, is a sure mark of a weak, unthinking mind. Some unchristian practices require long habit to render us familiar with them; but this which we are considering commences so early, and is so congenial to our nature, that it takes the appearance not so much of an acquirement as of an instinct, bearing some analogy to those which are given to animals for the purposes of self-defence. The learned and the ignorant, infancy and age, seem alike acquainted with this universal art, and almost equally perfect in its application.

We are angry: it is indignation at vice. We are niggardly: it is in order that we may assist more deserving objects. We are extravagant: our station requires expense, our health indulgence.

Dr. Franklin is said to have had a servant who was never in the wrong. At length the Doctor's patience was exhausted, and he said, "my good friend, you and I must part. I never knew a man who was good at an excuse, good for any thing else."

ANECDOTES.

Bishop Burnet, the Arminian prelate, affected to wonder how a

person of King William's piety and good sense, could so rootedly believe the doctrine of predestination. The Royal Calvinist replied, "Did I not believe predestination, I could not believe a providence; for it would be most absurd to suppose that a being of infinite wisdom would act without a plan! For which plan, predestination is only another name."

Some preachers near Olney dwelt on the doctrine of predestination. An old woman said—"Ah, I have long settled that point; for if God had not chosen me before I was born, I am sure he would have seen nothing in me to have chosen me afterwards."

A preacher, who was travelling in the stage, was asked by one of the company, if he believed the doctrine of election. "Be sure, I do," said the preacher. "Why then," said the querist, "do you preach the gospel?" "Because," said the preacher, "I believe that doctrine." "Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid; but speak, and hold not thy peace; for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee; for I have much people in this city."—"Therefore, I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they may also obtain the salvation, which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory."

ORDINATIONS.

The Rev. CHESTER ISHAM was on Wednesday the 13th February, ordained over the Trinitarian Congregational Church and Society in Taunton (Mass.) The Introductory Prayer by the Rev. Mr. Huntington, of North-Bridgewater; Sermon by the Rev. Mr. Green, of Boston; Consecrating Prayer by the Rev. Mr. Fiske, of Wrentham; Charge by the Rev. Mr. Andros, of Berkley; Right Hand of Fellowship by the Rev. Mr. Cobb, of Taunton; Address to the Church and Society, by the Rev. Dr. Codman of Dorchester; Concluding Prayer by the Rev. Mr. Sheldon, of Easton.

The Rev. WILLIAM EATON was on the 10th ult. installed over the the first Congregational Church and Society in Middleborough (Mass.) The Introductory Prayer by Rev. Mr. Ide, of Medway; Sermon by Rev. Mr. Fay, of Charlestown, from Acts XIV. 1. Consecrating Prayer by Rev. Mr. Cobb, of Rochester; Charge by Rev. Mr. Andros, of Berkley; Right Hand of Fellowship by Rev. Mr. Gay, of S. Bridgewater; Address to the Church and people by Rev. Mr. Holmes, of New-Bedford; Concluding Prayer by Rev. Mr. Spring, of Abington.

In Northampton, the Rev. MARK TUCKER, as associate Pastor with the Rev. Solomon Williams.—Sermon by the Rev. Dr. Nott, President of Union College.

In Ashburnham, Rev. GEORGE PERKINS, Sermon by the Rev. JOHN SABIN, of Fitchwilliam.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

* * Alpha, C, Tyro, Anagnosces, and Perdue, are received, and on our files.

THE
CHRISTIAN MAGAZINE.

VOL. I.

MAY, 1824.

No. 5.

ORIGINAL COMMUNICATIONS.

SINNERS HAVE NO REASON TO COMPLAIN
OF GOD.

Sinners have always been disposed to find fault with their Maker. Notwithstanding what he has said, in vindication of his character and conduct, they have persisted, from age to age, in their objections against him. This appears from the history of sinners, as it is related in the scriptures. Moses, in his last address to the murmuring Israelites, declares to their faces how they had impeached the conduct of Jehovah. He says, "Ye murmured in your tents and said, Because the Lord *hated* us, he hath brought us forth out of the land of Egypt, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to *destroy* us."—This was, indeed, a heavy complaint. It implicitly charged the Holy One of Israel with premeditated malevolence. In Ezekiel's day sinners felt and expressed the same hard thoughts of God. "Yet saith the house of Israel, The way of the Lord is not equal." Yea, it was a proverb in Israel, "The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on

edge." This was a public and general impeachment of the divine rectitude in the government of the world. God also complains of another objection, which the sinners in Zion made against him. They intimated that God did not properly regard and reward their religious services. "Ye have said, It is in vain to serve the Lord: and what profit is it, that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts?" Such were the complaints of sinners against God in the days of Moses and the prophets. And if we look into the New Testament we shall find that sinners have made similar complaints against God. The Savior spake the parable of the laborers to illustrate the murmuring spirit of sinners. In the parable, he says, that the laborers, when they received their hire, "murmured against the good man of the house." This statement is designed to represent the feelings and language of sinners against God. In the parable of the talents the slothful servant says to his master, "Lord, I knew that thou

art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown and gathering where thou hast not strawed."—Such is the language of every sinner in respect to God. He feels and is ready to say, that God is not a good being and does not treat his creatures well. It may be said, that the murmuring sinners, who have been mentioned were Jews who were extremely froward and perverse and worse than other nations. But we find that sinners before their day felt and expressed the same hard thoughts of God. Enoch, the seventh from Adam, represented sinners in his time to be guilty of speaking "hard speeches" against God. And we know, that wherever the gospel has been preached among the Gentiles, sinners have been extremely prone to complain, object and murmur against the divine character and conduct. Sinners, in all parts and all ages of the world, have universally agreed in their sentiments of God, and with one heart and one mouth have openly questioned the rectitude and goodness of his character. They have been disposed to speak against God, the greatest, the wisest and best of beings. It is therefore necessary to speak on God's behalf and to show that sinners have no reason to complain against him. And for this purpose I would offer the following observations.

1. God knows what is best.—God knows himself and is perfectly acquainted with his own perfections. Though he is incompre-

hensible by his creatures, yet he is not incomprehensible to himself. And he certainly knows all his creatures and all his works.—These he made; these he preserves, and with these he is always present. He fills heaven and earth and all places with his presence. There is nothing to limit or circumscribe the knowledge of God. His understanding is infinite. All things always lie open and naked in his sight. He knows the nature and tendency of all things. He sees the connection between all causes and effects.—He understands the construction of mind as well as matter. He knows what moral as well as natural causes will produce. He knows what men and angels can do and will do. He constantly sees through the universe. He knows the relations of all creatures to their fellow-creatures and to himself. He extends his views from the commencement to the conclusion of time; and perfectly knows the connection between time and eternity. He searches the hearts and tries the reins of all mankind. He knows the natures, the faculties and capacities of all intelligent beings. He knows the highest degrees of holiness and happiness which can possibly exist in the universe of moral agents. He knows the highest good of the universe; and what is necessary to promote it. Hence it is evident, that God knows what is best. He never has been and he never can be at any loss, in respect to the

greatest or smallest events.— Though darkness and ignorance possess the minds of all created beings, yet “God is light and in him is no darkness at all.” God can never err for want of knowledge and wisdom. He can never overlook nor forget any creature, object, or event, amidst the revolutions of time, the duration of eternity, or the immense number, variety, relations and connections of beings and things in the universe. He, who numbers the hairs of our heads and the stars in the sky; he, who weighs the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance; he, who sees all things past, present, and future, at one clear and perfect view, knows what is best.

2. God always means to do what is best. God is always absolutely independent for his existence and for his blessedness. There never has been any thing, either before or after the creation of the world, to bias his mind, or to induce him to do any thing, but what is for the best. His happiness and the general interests of the universe can never be separated. This he always clearly saw. No reason can be assigned, why God should ever mean to do any thing, which is inconsistent with the highest good of the universe. All creatures are his own and stand equally near to him. Hence it is rational to conclude, that he views all creatures in an impartial light and means to do what is, on the whole, best in respect to his numerous family. He always, knows

what is best to be done in heaven, on earth and in all worlds. And no reason can be conceived, why he should not act agreeably to the dictates of his perfect knowledge and unerring wisdom. And this is a powerful, presumptive evidence, that God always means to do what is best. But there is more direct, positive and infallible evidence, that God means to do what is best, *from his goodness.* “There is none good but one, that is God.—God is love.” God is perfect benevolence, God is good unto all. There is not a creature in heaven, on earth, or in any other part of the universe, that God does not love with pure, perfect and impartial benevolence. Now, if God does really love all his creatures and does really know what is best, he must necessarily mean to do what is best. The highest good of the universe, which God always sees and always loves, must always be the great and supreme object of his pursuit. At this object he must have aimed from the early ages of eternity and through all the ages of time. Infinite goodness united with infinite knowledge and wisdom must have laid God under an infinite obligation and a moral necessity to desire and intend what is best in all his conduct.— He must have meant well in all his purposes before the creation of the world. He must have formed as many and as good purposes, as infinite goodness could desire. He must have meant well in determining the number, the nature

and condition of all his creatures. He must have meant well in all his treatment of his creatures through all the stages of their existence. There is not a plainer proposition than this—that perfect wisdom, united with perfect goodness, must dictate what is best. And the light of nature and the light of revelation concur to demonstrate, that God is perfect in wisdom and goodness. The consequence is undeniable, that he always means to do what is best.

3. God always does what he means to do. He always means to do what is best and he always does it. This point admits of the clearest demonstration. The power of God is equal to his wisdom and goodness. He can do every thing. There is none can stay his hand. He can work and none can let it. “He is of one mind and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth even that he doeth.” He worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. He doeth his pleasure in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. He hath the hearts of all men in his hand and can turn them as he pleases. He can work in all men and in all rational creatures both to will and to do of his good pleasure. There is no wisdom, nor knowledge, nor counsel against the Lord. The heavens, the earth and all created beings are in his hand as the clay is in the hand of the potter. There is not a single creature or object, in the whole circle of creation, that can

prevent, or obstruct, or retard God, in doing what he meant to do from eternity. Hence God absolutely declares in his word, that it is his divine prerogative, notwithstanding the opposition, which the united efforts of creatures can make, to do what he meant to do. He says, “I am God and there is none else, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times the things, that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand and I will do all my pleasure.” It is just as certain, as that God exists, that he never has omitted one thing, which he meant to do, nor done one thing, which he did not mean to do. He has universally and constantly been accomplishing his designs, ever since he began to work, whenever that time may have been. He has perfectly gratified his benevolent affections and produced as great a degree of holiness and happiness and as little wickedness and misery, as he intended to produce in his eternal counsel of infinite wisdom and goodness. He has done what he meant to do; and he meant to do what was best; and he always knew what was best.

So much can be truly and safely said on God's behalf. It is more than can justly be said in behalf of any other being in the universe. Neither angels nor men in their best estate, ever knew what was best. Neither angels nor men were able to propose what was best. Neither angels nor men were able to accomplish

their purposes. Neither angels nor men have any reason to complain, if God charges them with folly.—But not only can more be said in favor of God than in favor of any other being; but as much can be said in favor of God as needs to be said in favor of any being in the universe. If it can be said in truth, that God always knew what was best; and always meant to do what was best; and has always done as he meant to do, then his character stands pure and spotless, in the full brightness and beauty of perfect wisdom and perfect goodness. He is as glorious and amiable as any being can be. He is such a God, as all wise and good beings would desire should exist and govern the universe according to his holy and sovereign pleasure. JOB.

THE GOSPEL ITS OWN WITNESS TO
THOSE WHO EMBRACE IT.

No. V.

In the former numbers having explained the gospel, shown what is implied in embracing it and having also shown that the gospel is the true way of salvation, it is now proposed to show *that the gospel is the only way of salvation.*

When the Lord Jesus Christ appeared to his apostles after his resurrection and before his ascension into heaven, he said, “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel unto every creature. He, that believeth and is baptised, shall be saved; but he, that be-

lieveth not shall be damned.”—When Peter was examined respecting the miracle, that was wrought upon the impotent man, he declared, that it was done by the name of Jesus Christ. And he then said, “This is the stone, which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” And to the church at Corinth Paul says—“According to the grace of God given unto me, as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”—

From these declarations it is evident, that the gospel is the only foundation for the salvation of sinners. And they, who truly embrace the gospel, see that there is no other way of salvation.

1. They see, that there is no other foundation of forgiveness, except the atonement, which has been made by the death of Jesus Christ upon the cross. They see the perfect holiness of God. And they know, that God must, from the very holiness of his character, be disposed and obliged to hate, condemn and punish every sinner, if he is treated as he deserves.—They also see the perfection of the divine law, which requires perfect holiness of every rational

creature and condemns every sinner to the pains of endless death. And they clearly see and deeply feel, that they are by nature wholly sinful and perfectly hateful; and that they deserve the wrath of God and the curse of the law forever. They know, that it is impossible, in the very nature of things, to remove or lessen their desert of endless punishment.--- They know, that the holiness, justice and goodness of God will inflict upon their souls the endless torments and pains of hell, if they receive what they deserve for their sinful conduct. And they, who truly embrace the gospel, are understandingly and cordially reconciled to the holiness, justice and goodness of God in the condemnation and punishment of sinners. Nor can God be willing that they should be saved, nor can they be willing to be saved from deserved punishment, at the expence of his glory. If there is no foundation, on which God can be just and yet pardon sinners, they know that their salvation is impossible. It is, therefore, only by the gospel, which exhibits the mediation and atonement of Jesus Christ, that they perceive that the salvation of sinners is possible. They perceive, that God can, through the atonement, be just and yet justify every one, who believeth in Jesus.--- But the character and glory of God, the order and happiness of his kingdom, the perfection of his law, their own sinfulness and ill-

desert and the very nature of things convince those persons, who embrace the gospel, that it is impossible they should be saved from the pains of endless death, without the foundation, which has been laid for the pardon of sinners, through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. They, who truly embrace the gospel, perceive that they cannot be saved without the sanctification of the Holy Spirit. The atonement of Jesus Christ does not remove nor lessen the obligations of sinners to be perfectly holy. Nor does it release any sinner from the condemning sentence of the law, until he truly accepts the salvation of the gospel. Nor will any person ever accept the salvation of the gospel without holy repentance towards God. While sinners hate God and the law, they equally hate Jesus Christ and the gospel of his grace. And the gospel opposes and condemns impenitent sinners as much as the law of God. Without real holiness no human being ever did, or ever will, or ever can truly embrace the gospel and receive and enjoy its holy salvation. Real penitents see, that it is morally impossible that sinners should be saved though Christ has died for the whole world and though salvation be freely and sincerely offered to sinners without exception and without distinction, unless they become, in their moral character, new creatures. But no means nor motives will ever in-

duce one person to repent and turn to God, without the almighty power and sovereign grace of the Holy Spirit. All mankind do, by nature, so perfectly hate God and the law, Jesus Christ and the gospel, that they will reject the offer of salvation and destroy themselves forever, if God does not change their hearts. It is impossible that any person ever should be saved without that holiness, which the Holy Spirit produces by his powerful and special influence. Nor is there the least reason to hope for the existence of real holiness in any human being, but what is founded on the gospel of Jesus Christ. Without the gospel and without the sound doctrines of the gospel, there is no reason to hope for that special and powerful influence of the Holy Spirit, which is necessary to the repentance and salvation of sinners. It is impossible, that any person ever should be saved without real holiness. And it is only by the gospel, that we can perceive any possibility of the sanctification of sinners through the power and grace of the Holy Spirit.

3. They, who truly embrace the gospel, perceive that the salvation of sinners arises from the eternal purpose of God. They know that salvation is not of themselves, either in its design, foundation, or application. They can perceive no reason to hope for the salvation of any human being, but what is founded on the pur-

pose of God, which he purposed in Jesus Christ before the foundation of the world. They know that they cannot be saved in opposition to the purpose of God.--- Nor have they, who truly embrace the gospel, any desire to be saved in opposition to his purpose. They have understandingly and unreservedly submitted themselves to his disposal. They know that they have destroyed themselves and deserve to be destroyed forever. Nor can they have the smallest prospect or hope of their justification and sanctification only in agreement with the eternal purpose of God. They know, that if God is not pleased to save sinners for his own sake, no person ever will be saved.--- But they perceive, that, according to the gospel, God gave Jesus Christ a certain number of the human family in the covenant of redemption. According to this covenant Christ came into the world and died on the cross to lay a foundation for the forgiveness of sinners. And according to this covenant, the Holy Spirit renews and sanctifies all, who were given to Christ by the Father. But without the gospel and without the doctrine of election, which is peculiarly the fundamental doctrine of the gospel ;--- there can be no reason to hope for the salvation of a single person. It is only in the gospel that God forms and reveals his glorious and gracious purpose to save sinners. This eternal purpose of

God, the atonement of Jesus Christ and sanctification by the Holy Spirit are the substance and essence of the true gospel. These peculiar, essential and fundamental doctrines of the gospel establish and exhibit the only possible foundation for the salvation of sinners. And they exclude the possibility of any other foundation for their salvation. The gospel itself, when it is correctly explained and understood, affords decisive evidence, that it reveals and establishes the only possible foundation for the salvation of sinners.

No. VI.

It is proposed, in this number, to conclude the consideration of the subject before us, by the following remarks.

1. Since those, who embrace the gospel, see it to be the true and only way of salvation, the gospel is its own witness and carries in itself infallible evidence of its real divinity. There are two kinds of evidence, that the christian religion is true. One is *external*; and the other is *internal*.—The external evidence in favor of christianity is derived principally from miracles, from the fulfilment of prophecy, from civil history, from ecclesiastical history and from the success of the gospel without the aid of civil power and against Jewish and Pagan prejudices, and against the united exertions of the enemies of all righteousness to suppress and destroy it. From these sources such a

mass of moral evidence has been derived and exhibited in favor of christianity, as has refuted, if not silenced, the most learned and zealous infidels. But though the greater part of mankind have not opportunity nor information sufficient to acquire and weigh this kind of evidence in support of the christian religion; yet they are able to obtain an internal and infallible evidence of the divinity of the gospel, from its nature, consistency, and powerful influence upon their understandings, consciences and affections. The gospel is holy in its nature, consistent in its doctrines, enlightening to the understanding, awakening to the conscience, and transforming to the heart. Its nature and effects are internal and infallible evidences of its divine origin and authority. The best way, therefore, to prove the divinity of the gospel to the apprehension and conviction of all classes of persons, is to exhibit its peculiar and essential doctrines with the greatest plainness and simplicity. In this way Christ preached, as one having authority and carried conviction to the understandings and consciences of the common people, who heard him gladly and profitably. In the same manner the apostles preached and carried conviction to their learned and unlearned hearers. Paul says—“Therefore, seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty;

not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully ; but by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." Though sinners do not experience the transforming influence of the gospel upon their hearts, as christians do ; yet they experience the light, which it throws into their understandings and the conviction, which it carries to their consciences. And this light and conviction afford irresistible evidence of its truth and divinity. This internal and infallible evidence in favor of the gospel fully accounts for its rapid spread at first, its extensive prevalence since and its astonishing influence in reforming and transforming both Jews and Gentiles in every part of the world.

2. They, who truly embrace the gospel, will never renounce it for the sake of any false religion. They have such an internal and infallible evidence of the truth, divinity and importance of the gospel and its essential doctrines, that they are able to detect and disposed to resist the most plausible and captivating errors of those, who lie in wait to deceive and destroy. Our Savior forewarned his true followers, that false prophets and false teachers would arise and exert all their art and deceit to corrupt their sentiments and lead them into fatal errors. But at the same time he assured them, that they could not be deceived and destroyed by the

most artful seducers. Both parts of Christ's prediction have been fulfilled. False teachers have arisen and would have deceived the very elect, if it had been possible ; but as Christ foretold, it has not been possible to deceive those, who understandingly and cordially embrace the gospel. And the reason has always been the same, that prevented Peter and the other apostles from apostacy. True christians have always known the gospel to be the true and the only way of salvation. And when they have been assailed by seducers to renounce Christ and his sound and saving doctrines, they have been prompted by their consciences and their hearts to say, "To whom shall we go?—We know that Christ has taught us the true and the only way to eternal life ; and we see no medium between cleaving to the gospel and sinking into absolute despair."—It is this unction, as the apostle John calls it, which completely preserves real christians from apostacy. He says, "little children, it is the last time ; and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists ; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us : for had they been of us they would no doubt have continued with us ; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that they were not all of us. But ye have an unction from the Holy One and ye know all things. I

have not written unto you, because ye know not the truth; but because ye know it and that no lie is of the truth." Though heretics and seducers may employ many specious and plausible arguments in support of their fatal errors, which real christians cannot easily refute; yet they possess that internal and infallible evidence of the truth and importance of the essential doctrines of the gospel, which arises from the sanctifying influence of these doctrines upon their own hearts. They are therefore able to distinguish these doctrines from every lie or false doctrine, which is not of the truth; and consequently they stand beyond the reach of all false teachers and seducers.

3. They, who truly embrace the gospel, will contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints and by which they are kept from fatal apostacy. They cannot look upon gross errors in religion with indifference and exercise an unchristian and unlimited catholicism towards all, who profess to believe the divinity of the gospel, while they openly deny and oppose its peculiar and fundamental doctrines. Though they make a distinction between essential doctrines and opinions of smaller importance and exercise christian charity and fellowship towards those, who firmly and honestly profess and maintain the truth as it is in Jesus; yet they will not bid God speed to those, who attack the very foundation of christiani-

ty. They will use every proper and christian method to stop the mouths, repel the arguments and destroy the influence of the subverters of the gospel. They who truly embrace the gospel know of nothing, that is more important or more worthy of their earnest and faithful exertions, than the precious truths of the gospel, upon which they have founded their own eternal hopes and upon which all must found their hopes in order to be saved. Any attempt to unite religious professors, while their sentiments respecting the fundamental doctrines of the gospel are essentially different, directly tends to obscure and depreciate the essence and glory of the gospel itself. Such an attempt tends to conceal and destroy the distinction between truth and falsehood, holiness and sin, saints and sinners, the way to heaven and hell.— They, then, who understand, believe and love the gospel and feel its divine and saving influence, will boldly and earnestly contend for the pure and sound doctrines of the gospel.

4. They who do not cordially and sincerely embrace the gospel, are continually liable to renounce it for any false scheme of religion, which is more pleasing to their corrupt hearts. And any false scheme of religion is more pleasing than the truth to the corrupt hearts of sinners. Though sinners may be thoroughly convinced in their understanding and consciences, that the gospel is the

true and the only way of salvation; yet while their hearts hate and oppose it, they clearly see that it is no way of salvation for themselves. And therefore they are ready to embrace any false scheme of religion, which promises them salvation in their present unholy and depraved state. And every false scheme of religion does promise salvation to those, who are under the entire dominion of their depraved and selfish hearts. Accordingly seducers always attack the heart rather than the understandings and consciences of sinners. They know that they are easily blinded, flattered and seduced through the selfishness and deceit and pride of their own hearts. By the depravity of their own hearts sinners are predisposed to receive any false scheme of religion. The false notions of the Universalists, Unitarians, Arminians and Antinomians agree with the selfish and deceitful affections of sinners, who are prompted by their own hearts to love the darkness of error and to hate and reject the light of truth. Grace in the heart is the only infallible preservative from gross and fatal errors. True believers, and true believers only, who experimentally understand, believe and love the holy gospel of Jesus Christ, are secured against the destructive influence of those, who lie in wait to deceive, and who are zealously, artfully and indefatigably engaged to spread errors and delusions. Peter says to his christ-

ian brethren, "Ye, therefore, beloved, seeing ye knew these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your steadfastness. But grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." And again it is written—"Be not therefore carried about with divers and strange doctrines; for it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace." JOHN.

SERMONS—No. IV.

GOD IS DISPLEASED WITH INCONSISTENT PROFESSORS.

HOSEA, VII. 8.—*Ephraim is a cake not turned.*

By Ephraim we are to understand the ten tribes of Israel in distinction from the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin. Though the ten tribes forsook the house and worship of God in Jerusalem; yet they still professed to be the people of God, and he continued to call and treat them as such, until they were carried away captive by the king of Assyria. He sent his prophets to reprove them for their idolatry and bring them to repentance and reformation, though they met with little or no success. In this chapter God is speaking by his prophet to Ephraim or the ten tribes, whom he represents as very corrupt and degenerate, and destitute of that uniformity or consistency of conduct, which became

their religious profession. And to give them a clear and striking idea of their criminal imperfection, he compares them to a cake not turned. "Ephraim is a cake not turned." A cake not turned is baked on one side, and not on the other; appears well on one side, and not on the other; and seems to be fit for use, but is not so. This similitude applies to all professors of religion, who resemble the corrupt and degenerate Ephraimites. They are a cake not turned, and their criminal inconsistency is a moral imperfection, which is displeasing to God. Taking the text, therefore, in its true and proper sense, we may draw this just conclusion from it,

That God is displeased with professors of religion, when they do not maintain a uniformity or consistency in their christian course.

I shall first consider when they may be said not to maintain uniformity or consistency in their christian course; and then show why God is displeased with them for it.

1. Let us consider when professors of religion may be said not to maintain uniformity or consistency in their christian course. Though there be no man that liveth and sinneth not; though the best of men fall short of absolute perfection in holiness in the present state of probation; yet in a qualified or scriptural sense, there are many professors, who walk circumspectively, uniformly, and consistently. Though no one of

the patriarchs, prophets, or apostles arrived at sinless perfection in this world; yet they maintained such a beautiful uniformity, and consistency in their religious course, as justly entitled them to the character of just and upright men. And there has been ever since a succession of religious professors, who have deserved the same amiable and distinguished character. But it cannot be denied, on the other hand, that many of those, who have professed the true religion, have not walked worthy of their high and holy calling, by neglecting to maintain a proper uniformity or consistency in their christian course. This renders it proper to inquire when professors of religion may be said to be chargeable with moral imperfection. Here it may be observed,

1. That they do not maintain a proper uniformity or consistency of conduct, when they sometimes perform, and sometimes neglect, the same external duties. It is to be presumed, that most professors of religion sometimes perform some religious duties externally, though they sometimes neglect to perform them. Are there not some professors, who sometimes pray in secret, but sometimes neglect this duty? who sometimes read the Bible and pray in their families, but sometimes neglect these duties? who sometimes attend public worship on the sabbath, but sometimes neglect to attend? who sometimes come to the

table of Christ, but sometimes neglect to come? And are there not some, who oftener neglect some or all these external duties of religion, than they perform them? Who will say, that such professors maintain a proper uniformity in their external conduct? Or who can deny, that they are chargeable with gross inconsistency? When professors sometimes perform, and sometimes neglect the same external duties of religion, it is impossible for them to reconcile and justify their own conduct. They always feel inexcusable and self-condemned.

2. There is another class of professors, who do not maintain uniformity or consistency in their external conduct. I mean such as constantly practice externally every *religious* duty, but not every *christian* and *moral* virtue. Though they keep up the forms of family religion, and generally attend public worship and divine ordinances; yet they appear to carry but very little of religion into their secular employments and common concerns. They do not exhibit that truth in their declarations, nor that fidelity in their promises, nor that honesty in their dealings, nor that sobriety in their conversation, nor that concern for the good of individuals and of public bodies, which the gospel requires of all its professors. The gospel requires them to carry the principles of religion with them into all places, into all companies, and into all their personal and public

concerns, and to govern their conduct towards themselves and all others, by those principles. Christ requires them to do to others, as they would that others should do to them; and the apostle exhorts them, to "do whatsoever things are *true*, whatsoever things are *just*, whatsoever things are *honest*, whatsoever things are *pure*, whatsoever things are *lovely*, and whatsoever things are of *good report*." The gospel requires the practice of every christian and moral virtue, as much as the practice of every secret, private, and public duty of devotion. Those professors of religion, therefore, who observe the duties of devotion, but neglect the practice of christian and moral virtues, are grossly inconsistent. They are like the cake not turned. They appear well on one side, and not on the other. They resemble those whom the prophet Jeremiah described and condemned, who cried, The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, are these; while they oppressed the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed innocent blood, and walked after other gods to their hurt. It must be further observed,

3. That professors of religion do not maintain uniformity or consistency in their conduct, when they practise all religious duties and moral virtues, without true love to God or man. There were many such professors in the Jewish church, before Christ's day, and

especially while he dwelt on earth. He often had occasion to speak to them and of them. He described, reprov'd, and condemn'd them, in the strongest terms. He said, "Well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips; *but their heart is far from me.*"—He said, "Woe unto you scribes and pharisees, for ye pay tithe of mint, annise and cummin, and have *omitted* the weightier matters of the law, *judgment, mercy, and faith*: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Ye strain at a knat, and swallow a camel. Ye make clean the *outside* of the cup, and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Ye also *outwardly appear righteous* unto men, but *within*, ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity." These persons were just like Ephraim, "*a cake not turned.*" There was no uniformity or consistency between their *external* conduct and *internal* views and motives. But have there been no such professors since their day? If there are any such now, they certainly do not maintain a uniformity or consistency of character. I now proceed to show,

II. Why God is displeased with inconsistent professors. Several plain and obvious reasons may be mentioned. And,

1. God is displeased with such professors, because they break covenant with him. They have

publicly and solemnly entered into covenant with God, in which they engaged to love him supremely, and to obey him constantly and universally. When the children of Israel made a public profession of religion, they bound themselves to obey not only the ten commands, but all that the Lord had said unto them. They took an oath to pay a cheerful, universal, and persevering obedience to the divine commands. They made no exception or reserve. And God seemed to place confidence in their sincerity and faithfulness. "For he said, surely they are my people, *children that will not lie.*" But he was disappointed. For "nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and lied unto him with their tongues: for their *heart* was not right with him, neither were they *stedfast in his covenant.*" For which "he was wroth, and greatly *abhorred Israel.*" Those who make a public profession of religion at this day, lay themselves under the same solemn vows and engagements to give themselves wholly to the Lord, and to be uniformly obedient to his commands. Whenever, therefore, they are inconsistent and insincere in their obedience, and unsteadfast in their covenant, God has reason to be displeased with them for their violation of their covenant vows and engagements. He looks on their hearts as well as outward appearance, and always knows whether they sometimes obey, and

sometimes disobey his commands ; whether they obey some of his commands and not others ; and whether they never obey any of his commands from a pure and upright heart. And he is always justly displeased, if they fail of uniformity or consistency in all, or any of these respects.

2. God is displeased with inconsistent professors, for the reproach they bring upon themselves and upon professors in general. The world understand the nature and obligation of a religious profession, and are both able and disposed to censure those, who do not uniformly walk agreeably to it.—For they imagine by condemning inconsistent professors, they implicitly and virtually justify themselves. They think and say, that they have never been guilty of such gross insincerity and hypocrisy, as to *profess* to obey God, while they never did and never intended to obey him. But they do not stop here, but take occasion from the conduct of inconsistent professors, to reproach the most amiable, uniform and consistent christians. They insinuate that the consistent are just like the inconsistent *at heart*, and though they have not yet, they will sooner or later discover their insincerity and inconsistency. This is what Christ fore-warned his true followers to expect from the world. He told them, “If ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but because ye are not of the world, but I

have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.” Inconsistent professors are the occasion of bringing great reproach not only on themselves, but on all who name the name of Christ. And by this, they throw a stumbling-block before the world, and retard, if not prevent some sincere friends of Christ from performing an act of grateful obedience to his dying command.—They symbolize with the insincere and inconsistent scribes and pharisees, to whom Christ said, “Woe unto you : for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men : for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are *entering* to go in.” I may add,

3. Insincere and inconsistent professors do highly displease God because they not only bring a reproach upon the *profession* of christianity but upon *christianity itself*. The world claims a right to judge of religion by the effects which it appears to have upon the hearts and lives of those who profess it. And they choose to judge of it by the effects which they pretend it has upon the hearts and lives of inconsistent professors. They say it makes them worse, instead of better, than non-professors, and even pagans and savages. This has been lately said before the most august assembly in the United States ; and this has often been said by both pagans and savages in respect to nominal christians. These remarks are altogether *unfounded*, because it

is not christianity itself that makes inconsistent professors act so inconsistently and criminally, but the *want* of it. If they possessed the pure spirit, which christianity recognises, and acted it out, it would throw what is called natural religion, and every species of false religion into the *shade*, and expose its falsehood, absurdity, and turpitude to just detestation and contempt. But it cannot be denied, that the conduct of inconsistent professors, does give great occasion to infidels, pagans, and savages to think and speak reproachfully of the religion of the Bible. The conduct of inconsistent professors is one of the greatest obstacles or impediments that ministers of the gospel meet with, in preaching the gospel to savages, or pagans, or infidels, or the men of the world in general. Inconsistent professors, therefore, do more to obstruct and injure the cause of religion, than any other description of men. Though all the enemies of religion despise and condemn their conduct, yet they employ it as the best weapon they can use to combat the doctrines and duties of christianity, which they hate. Hosea says of Ephraim, *who was a cake not turned*, “that he provoked God to anger most bitterly.” God is highly displeased with inconsistent professors of religion, because they violate their own solemn vows and engagements, because they bring reproach upon themselves and all other professors, and because they

strengthen the hearts and hands of the enemies of all righteousness.

It only remains to improve the subject.

1. It appears from what has been said, that those who entertain a hope of having experienced a saving change, ought to make a solemn pause, and critically and impartially examine the nature of the new views and exercises they have had, before they make a public profession of religion. It is a solemn and interesting transaction to enter into covenant with God, and bind themselves to love him supremely, and obey him constantly and universally as long as they live, and as long as they exist.—All this is implied in making a public profession of christianity, which it is extremely dangerous for any one to do, who has not received the grace of God in truth. All persons are naturally disposed to trust in their own hearts, and to think they are better than they are; especially at a time when they are awakened to attend to their spiritual and eternal concerns. They are very apt to imagine, that their strong and ardent desires after *happiness* are sincere desires after *holiness*; that their *worldly* sorrow is *godly* sorrow; and that their *self-condemnation* is *self-abasement*, and *genuine submission*. Their selfishness puts on the appearance of benevolence, which leads them to mistake false love for true love, false repentance for true repentance, and false submission for real reconciliation to

God. But they have no right to deceive themselves; and if they would examine themselves critically according to the rules of the gospel, they would not build their eternal hopes upon such a false and sandy foundation; nor presume to profess supreme love to God, until they had the witness in themselves, that they possessed the spirit of adoption. Those, who have this evidence of their gracious state, may safely enter into covenant with God, because they stand entitled to the spirit of promise, and have solid ground to believe, that he who has begun a good work in them, will carry it on until the day of Christ. But those, who make an insincere profession, are in danger of living an inconsistent life; and of doing great injury to the cause they profess to promote. It seriously and deeply concerns all those, therefore, who think of making a public profession, and joining with the true friends of God in celebrating divine ordinances, to regard the apostolic caution, "Let a man *examine himself*, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup."

2. It appears from what has been said, that it is less difficult for professors of religion, to determine their own true character, than for non-professors to determine theirs. Professors have formed a standard for themselves. Their own public profession is a good standard. They know what they *desired* and

intended to do, when they made their profession, and what at that time, they *bound* themselves to do. It is only for them to look at their own rule of duty, and compare their *views*, and *feelings*, and *conduct*, with that rule, and they may easily determine whether they *have*, or *have not*, kept covenant with God. Non-professors have not such a standard, with which to compare themselves. Though they may have made serious resolutions; yet they have never sworn before God and man, that they would live according to their resolutions; and consequently it is not so easy for them, as for professors, to know whether they have ever had the spirit of true obedience, or dealt deceitfully with God. And we have reason to fear, that many neglect to make a public profession of religion, for the sake of being more at liberty, to neglect keeping their hearts with all diligence, and to neglect many duties, which professors bind themselves to perform. Hence they keep themselves *in doubt*, whether they *have*, or *have not*, experienced a saving change. But it is not so easy for professors to keep themselves *in doubt*. They know, that the vows of God are upon them, and they frequently have proper occasion to compare their hearts and lives with an infallible standard, and are constrained to form an opinion in *favor*, or *against* their sincerity. This makes it more easy for *them*,

than for *others*, to determine whether their hearts are right with God or not.

3. It appears from what has been said, that professors have reason to expect, that the world *will* judge of their sincerity, by their profession. They can easily discover whether they act consistently with their own standard, which makes no allowance for the least moral imperfection. And if they perceive, or think they perceive, that they do not act consistently, they are ready to construe the least inconsistency as an evidence, that they are *hypocrites*, or at least *hypocritical*. Though this be unscriptural and uncandid, yet professors have reason to expect it from the world. They are, therefore, properly exhorted, "to walk circumspectly, and avoid all *appearance* of evil." Christ represents them as the *salt* of the earth, and the *light* of the world; and it is of serious importance, that they cause their light so to shine before men, that they may see their good works, and glorify their Father who is in heaven.

4. This subject admonishes any, who are conscious to themselves, that they have not maintained a proper uniformity or consistency in their christian course, to repent and reform. They are to be their own judges according to their own standard; and they are very competent to form a just estimate of their *internal* views and exercises, and of their *external* conduct.— Though neither professors nor

non-professors, have ever complained of them; yet if they are conscious of self-inconsistency, it becomes them to purify their hearts, and retrace their path; and in time to come, to keep themselves in the love of God. It is more than possible, that this may be the immediate duty of some, who have named the name of Christ. It is emphatically a day of declension, and there may be some, who have not been steadfast in keeping covenant with God.— This calls for self-condemnation, self-abasement, and godly sorrow.

Finally, this subject calls upon all professors to examine themselves before they come to the table of the Lord. You have often read the covenant you have made with God, or heard it read. But you will permit me to bring to your recollection the substance of it. You engaged to take God for your supreme portion, and to derive your highest happiness from the service and enjoyment of him. Have you uniformly done it? You engaged to keep his sabbath holy from beginning to end. Have you uniformly done it? You engaged to walk in your houses with a perfect and upright heart, and to bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Have you uniformly done it? You engaged to attend public worship and divine ordinances from sabbath to sabbath, and from time to time. Have you uniformly performed these duties? You engaged to exercise brotherly love

and brotherly care and watchfulness towards your brethren. Have you uniformly done it? If you would be so good to yourselves, as to compare your hearts and lives with the vows you have made to God, you may draw a just conclusion, whether you are like "*Ephraim, a cake not turned.*" And if you should find, that you have not maintained that *external* and *internal* consistency, which your profession requires; go to God to heal your backslidings, and grant you that peace, which nothing but a well-founded evidence of his pardoning mercy can afford you.

THE NATURE OF THE WILL.

It is of great importance to have clear and just ideas upon this subject, which has been so much agitated by different denominations of christians. Almost all, who have treated upon the will, have used the term ambiguously and affixed two very different meanings to it. They have commonly, if not universally, considered the will to be both a *faculty* and an *exercise* of the mind. Mr. Edwards says, "The will is plainly that, by which the mind chooses any thing. The faculty of the will is that faculty, or power, or principle of the mind, by which it is capable of choosing. An act of the will is the same as an act of choosing or choice."* According to this definition of the word *will*, it signifies

*Enquiry, p. 2. London edition.

two very different things; namely, a *faculty* of the mind and an *exercise* or choice of the mind. But it is to be questioned whether the word *will* ought ever to be used to denote a faculty of the mind.—A faculty of the mind is a power of receiving ideas independently of the will. Thus perception is a faculty of receiving ideas independently of the will. It does not depend upon the will, when our eyes are open at noonday, whether we shall perceive the light of the sun or not. We must see the light, whether we do or not choose to see it. And this holds true of all other sensible objects. Our perception of them does not depend on the will. The conscience is another natural faculty of the mind, or a power of receiving ideas independently of the will. We are so formed, that when a virtuous and a vicious action are plainly represented, we cannot help approving of virtue and disapproving of vice. It does not depend upon our choice, whether an act of murder shall appear virtuous or vicious. Now, if a faculty of the mind be a power of receiving ideas independently of the will; then it is absurd to suppose, that the will is a *faculty*; or a power of receiving ideas independently of itself. The will is not a faculty, or principle, or power, or appetite, or instinct, or taste of the mind. All these are things, in which the mind is totally passive and does not act at all.—It is commonly and justly suppos-

ed, that Adam lost none of his natural faculties by eating of the forbidden fruit ; and that none of his posterity have lost any of their natural faculties in consequence of that act. But it is certain that all mankind are naturally destitute of a *will* to love God. And if this want of a will were the want of a *faculty* to love God, then they would be under a natural inability to love him : and of consequence, entirely excusable for not loving him. The truth is, all men possess all the natural faculties, which are necessary to constitute them moral agents and lay them under moral obligation to love God ; or to choose good and hate evil.— Their *want of will* to choose and to do right, therefore, cannot be a want of faculty, principle, or power to choose and refuse, or to act as free moral agents.— The will never was, either before or since the apostacy of Adam, a faculty of the mind. But it is something entirely different from every power, faculty, or principle of the soul. It is, in a word, the action or exercise of the mind. The will consists in voluntary affections. It is loving or hating, choosing or refusing, in which the mind is altogether active.— In this sense the word will is always to be used by those, who employ it. It never properly means a principle, or power, or faculty, or disposition, or instinct of the mind ; but only choice, action, or volition. The will is a general term, which includes and signifies

all the moral exercises of the mind. It is properly used in the same latitude as the word heart, which comprehends every exercise of mind, that has a moral quality, or which is either praise or blameworthy. Some exercises of the mind are immanent and produce no external actions. And some are imperative or commanding exercises of the mind and produce external actions. But all the exercises of the mind, that are of a moral nature, whether they do or do not produce external actions, belong to the will. The will, therefore, always means nothing more nor less, than the free, voluntary exercises of the mind.— What has been said respecting the nature of the will suggests the following remarks.

1. When the will of a sinner is renewed, or his heart is changed, there is not an implantation of a new principle, but only the production of new exercises. This sentiment respecting the renovation of the will is agreeable to scripture, reason and experience. It is agreeable to scripture, which represents regeneration to consist in the production of holy affections. The apostle says, “ The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Spirit, who is given unto us.” Again he says —“ The fruit of the Spirit is love.” And John says “ Love is of God ; and every one, that loveth, is born of God.”—It is agreeable to reason. Mankind need no other change than a change of their

hearts from the exercise of unholy affections to the exercise of holy affections. They need no new principle, faculty or power of the mind.—And it is agreeable to experience. For when sinners are renewed, they do not find that they have any new principle, faculty or power. But they do find that they have new and holy affections. They do find in themselves holy love and its great and happy effects.

2. Sinners are under the same obligation to love God before as after they are renewed. They are as able to love God; they have the same power, ability, or capacity to love God before they are renewed as afterwards. The law has the same authority over unrenewed and renewed sinners. And their conscience coincides with the law and binds sinners to love God. Obligation to do right is wholly founded upon the rational powers and natural capacity of intelligent beings. If sinners are not bound, before their hearts are changed, to love God, then they transgress no obligation and are not sinful.

3. Men are as active in regeneration as in sanctification. Regeneration is the commencement of holy affections. Renewed sinners are as active in their holy affections, when they first love God as in any subsequent exercise of holiness.

4. It is a dangerous error, that sinners must have a new principle implanted, before they can em-

brace the gospel. This is the opinion of many persons. But it is repugnant to the law of God, which requires and binds all rational creatures to be perfectly holy.—It is repugnant to the gospel of Christ, which requires and binds sinners to repent and believe without delay. It opposes the dictates of conscience, which shows every sinner that he is wholly criminal and blameable for every unholy affection. Besides, if sinners *cannot* embrace the gospel without the implantation of a new principle, they are under no obligation to embrace it and are totally excusable for their impenitence and unbelief.

5. Sinners are just as capable of loving and believing the gospel as of performing external actions.—They think there is a difference. They suppose, that they can perform external actions without a new principle or faculty, but that they cannot exercise love or faith without one. But multitudes of sinners have loved and believed the gospel without any new faculty of mind or new principle of action. They have done it by the proper exercise of the rational powers, which are common to saints and sinners, holy and unholy creatures. It requires no more power to love God, repent of sin and believe the gospel than it requires to perform any external action.

6. It is as easy to point out the duty of sinners as the duty of saints

For their duty is the same. God says to all rational creatures, "Be ye holy; for I am holy."

PETER.

REMARKS ON THE UNION OF DIVINITY AND HUMANITY IN THE CHARACTER OF CHRIST.

It is a direction of our Savior, in reference to a particular subject, "What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." We are not, however, obliged to confine this direction to the particular subject, in reference to which it was originally given. It is capable of being used in a far more extended sense. It may, without impropriety, be considered as constituting a general direction; forbidding us to put any thing asunder, which God joined together.

It is my present object to consider this direction in reference to the union in Christ of the divine, and human nature.

To prepare the way for the proposed remarks upon the subject, I shall adduce several passages of the inspired volume, which appear clearly to prove, that Christ does, indeed, unite in his character both divinity and humanity. In proof of the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, may be adduced the following passages: "Unto us a child is born—and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, *The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father.*" "In the begin-

ning was the Word, and the Word was with God, *and the Word was God.* All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made, that was made. And the *Word was made flesh*, and dwelt among us." "In him dwelleth all the *fulness of the Godhead bodily.*" "I and my Father are one." "I am in the Father, and the Father in me." "He, that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God." "Great is the mystery of godliness; *God was manifest in the flesh.*" "Christ, who is over all, *God blessed for ever.*" These are a few among many passages, which might be adduced in proof of the Savior's divinity. And these passages, if any language could, conclusively prove, that he does, indeed, possess a nature truly divine.

There are passages, however, equally clear and explicit, which assert the doctrine of the *humanity* of Christ. Such are the following: "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, *the man Christ Jesus.*" "*This man*, because he endureth forever, hath an unchangeable priesthood."—"He is despised and rejected of men—a *man of sorrows*, and acquainted with grief." "Jesus of Nazareth, *a man* approved of God among you by miracles and wonders." Than these declarations, none could be more explicit.—They clearly prove, that Christ is literally and properly *man*. But

those passages above adduced clearly prove, that he is literally and properly *God*. Since, then, Christ is both *God* and *man*, the inference is unavoidable, that he unites in himself both divinity and humanity. Yet, conclusive as is the evidence, that Christ is both divine and human, to put his *divinity* and *humanity* asunder, is what is often attempted. In the early times of the christian dispensation, there arose a certain sect, which denied the *humanity* of Christ.—Finding in the Bible conclusive evidence of his divinity, and concluding, that he could not be both divine and human, they explained away or rejected those passages, which speak of his humanity, and maintained, that he was a *man* in appearance only—not in reality. At the present time, great numbers verge to the opposite extreme. By them the doctrine of the *divinity* of Christ is denied. Finding, in the Bible, numerous passages in proof of the *inferiority* of Christ to the Father; of his being, indeed, properly *man*, and assuming the point, that he cannot be both *God* and *man*, they explain away or reject as interpolations all those passages, which assert the doctrine of his divinity, and maintain, that he is *man* and *only man*, as was Moses, David, or Paul. But to whichever of these extremes we run, we attempt to put asunder what are indissolubly joined together—the *divinity* and *humanity* of Christ. But why does any person attempt to put

these asunder? Is it for want of conclusive evidence, that Christ is both divine and human? But the evidence in proof of the doctrine of his *divinity* is as conclusive, as is the evidence in proof of the doctrine of his *humanity*. We are as much obliged, by the many and positive declarations of the Bible upon the subject, to believe, that Christ is a *divine being*, as we are, by the many and positive declarations of the Bible upon the subject, to believe, that he is *man*. Our authority for believing the *former* is just the same as our authority for believing the *latter*; the *express word of God*. And unless we are prepared to tread on infidel ground, we cannot deny, either that Christ is *divine*, or that he is *human*; but we must admit and believe both. But will any say, this is a mysterious doctrine—too mysterious to be believed? That it is a mysterious doctrine, is freely admitted. It is expressly so denominated by an apostle. He says—“*Great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh.*” But the mystery, which this doctrine involves, furnishes no good reason, why the doctrine should not be believed. Though the doctrine is, in some respects, mysterious, it yet involves no contradiction. *How*, and in what particular *manner*, divinity and humanity are united in Christ, we cannot tell. But to say, that these are united in him, involves no absurdity. The fact is, the world is full of mystery. Short-sighted mor-

tals cannot comprehend the mode of their own existence. *That man has a body and a soul, which are, in some manner, united and mutually affect each other*, is an acknowledged truth. But who can explain the precise manner, in which the body and the soul of man are united, and affect each other? *That they may be united*, we perceive, involves no contradiction. But *how* they are united, we cannot tell.—It is to us mysterious. Shall we, then deny, that the body and the soul of man *are* united, and mutually affect each other, simply because we cannot tell *how* this is accomplished? This, to be consistent with ourselves, we must do, if we deny, that Christ is both divine and human, simply because we cannot perceive *how* divinity and humanity can be united in him. For, the union in Christ of divinity and humanity is attended with no greater mystery, than is the union in man of a material, *mortal* body, and an immaterial, *immortal* soul. Are we, then, prepared to take the broad ground of infidelity, and to believe nothing, which we cannot, *in all respects*, understand? If we do take that ground, our belief will be, indeed, circumscribed; since there are but few things, with which we are acquainted, which are not, *in some respects*, mysterious. But let it be far from us to take the broad ground of infidelity, which has been mentioned. Rather let us firmly believe, that Christ *does* unite in his character divinity and

humanity: and, because this doctrine is taught by numerous and positive declarations of the inspired volume.

The view of the doctrine, which has now been taken, harmonizes all the declarations of the Bible upon the subject. If we only keep distinctly in mind the fact, that Christ unites in himself both divinity and humanity, we shall never be at a loss what to do with any passages relating to his character, which we may find in the sacred volume. When we find passages, in which he is denominated *God*—which ascribe to him divine attributes and works—and represent him to be a proper object of religious worship, we shall know, that all such passages relate to him as a *divine* Being.—But when, on the other hand, we find passages, which represent him as being *inferior* to the Father—as praying to the Father—as suffering and dying upon the cross—as being, indeed, *man*, we shall know that all such passages relate to his *humanity*. It is believed, that, by many, who believe in the divinity of our Savior, the point, which has been illustrated, is not sufficiently considered.—They believe, that Christ is *divine*. But not, at the same time, considering, that he is also *human*, they are perplexed with those declarations of the Bible, which, at first view, appear to be inconsistent with the doctrine of his supreme divinity. And when such passages are adduced by an objector,

how to reconcile them with the Savior's divinity, they know not.—But let the reader only keep distinctly in mind, that Christ unites in his character both *divinity* and *humanity*, and he will never have occasion to be perplexed upon this point. To an objector, who adduces those passages, which represent Christ as being *inferior* to the Father with a view to show, that he is not a *divine* Being, you may reply, that you as firmly believe in the *humanity* of Christ, as he possibly can; but those passages of the sacred volume, which he adduces, relate, simply to the *humanity* of the Savior, and, therefore, do nothing toward proving, that he is not *supremely divine*. F.

LETTER FROM A MEMBER OF A
CHURCH TO THE PASTOR.

March 30, 1819.

BELOVED PASTOR—As in the presence of God, before whom I must one day stand and give an impartial account of the deeds done in the body, I would give you an account of some of the views and feelings of my mind since the reformation in this town, in the year 1809. I had some serious thoughts about religion. I thought it was necessary, and that I could not be happy after death without it. But I was so fond of gay company and vain amusements, that I thought I would delay it, until a more convenient season. I thought I might

perhaps, have an opportunity on a sick bed, to make my peace with God. I felt greatly opposed to the reformation, and was sorry when I heard that any were brought from nature's darkness into God's marvellous light; especially if they were young persons. I did not like to hear conversation about religion. But at last I began to feel no wish to go into such vain company, as I had before frequented; and I thought that those, who had religion, did not want me with them. I felt very serious for some time. But one afternoon, a little before the sun set, I was in the house alone and suddenly I felt, as I thought, such light and love break upon my mind, that I could hardly contain myself. I thought I had a view of my Savior, with arms extended to receive me. I could sing and pray and had no doubt but I had passed from death unto life. I thought I took great satisfaction in reading, praying, going to meeting, and being with christians, and hearing them converse upon spiritual things. I went forward and joined the church. I thought the things I once hated, I now loved, and the things I once loved, I now hated. I thought I felt anxious for those, that were dead in sin, to be made alive by Christ. Thus I went on almost for ten years.—Perhaps but few in that time were more particular in the outward forms of religion. But,

"No outward forms can make us clean,
The leprosy lies deep within."

When the reformation commenced, I felt as if all was not right. It appeared to me, that I never had felt as some did, that were awakened. I began to think that I never had seen the plague of my heart; that I never had felt such distress on account of sin.— But I thought I had felt the happy feelings, that they expressed and then I would feel quite contented for a while; but did not feel just as I wished. Sometimes in meeting it would be mentioned concerning feeling the plague of our hearts, that we must feel like lost condemned sinners, before we could receive Christ in our hearts, the hope of glory. I knew I never had any realizing sense of my awful situation. It appeared to me, as if what was said about knowing the plague of our hearts was spoken wholly for me. I believe the Spirit of the Lord set it home to my conscience. Thus I continued sometimes hoping and sometimes fearing, until Saturday the 20th of March, it came so powerfully upon me, that I had never seen the plague of my heart, that I could have no peace. I then looked back to see how much love and joy I had experienced; how much I had prayed, read and been to meeting. I thought if I was not a christian, I should not have had so much love for such things, but I could find no peace. I took the Bible to see if I could find any comfort there, but almost the first words my eyes glanced upon

were—"purge out the old leaven." These words powerfully impressed my mind. I tried two other books, but found no comfort. I was then constrained to give up my hope. I felt much distressed on account of sin, which before had appeared but small. I found it was not outward sins only, that would condemn us, but the secret thoughts of the heart. I viewed the day of judgment to be near, an awful eternity before me, and an angry God above me. I knew not which way to turn. I was hedged up on every side. Sometimes I thought there was no mercy for me. I knew that neither men nor angels could help me. I thought if the Lord should have mercy upon me, it would be mercy indeed. I sometimes thought I should be willing to have one of my limbs cut off if I could obtain peace of mind by it. Thus I continued until Sabbath evening, 28th of March, I went to meeting and humbly trust the Lord enabled me to submit to his righteous government. I felt willing to be in his hands to be disposed of as was most for his glory. My burden left me. I then found sweet peace and joy in believing. I think I have felt that love and reconciliation to God, which I never before experienced. And it is by the grace of God I am what I am. Not unto me, but unto his name be all the glory.

SCHEMES OF SERMONS.

No. 1.

FAITHFUL MINISTERS IN STRAIGHTENED CIRCUMSTANCES.

In Damascus the governor under Aretas, the king, kept the city of Damascus with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me; and through a window, in a basket was I let down by a wall and escaped his hands.

II. Cor. XI. 33.

Doctrine.—Faithful ministers of the gospel are liable to be brought into very straightened circumstances.

I. Show in what respects they are liable to be brought into very straightened circumstances. They are liable to be straightened in the following respects. 1. Their supposed qualifications for the ministry. 2. Their ability ever to become properly qualified for their office. 3. The evidence of their own piety. 4. Their temporal subsistence. 5. The inconstancy of christian friends. 6. The deceitfulness of unfaithful professors. 7. The opposition of avowed enemies. 8. The stratagems of satan.

II. Show why faithful ministers are liable to be brought into such straightened circumstances. 1. To try their faithfulness. 2. To promote their instruction. 3. To humble their spirit. 4. To increase their usefulness. 5. That they may be induced to trust in God. 6. That they may experience his loving-kindness. 7. That they may be prepared for spiritual enjoyments.

IMPROVEMENT.

1. If such trials are necessary

to prepare ministers of the gospel for such purposes, then a large portion of professed ministers are of little worth in respect to the great objects of their office.

2. If such trials be necessary to prepare ministers of the gospel for the great objects of their office, then the popular method of preparing young men for the ministry is not remarkably beneficial.

3. If God for such purposes brings his ministers into straightened circumstances, then his ways are exceedingly different from the ways of men in respect to his ministers.

4. We may see from this subject how such ministers, as have been eminent in the service of God, have been raised to their eminence.

5. Such ministers, as have not passed through severe and decisive trials, have reason to tremble for themselves.

6. Such ministers, as God has preserved and delivered in the midst of heavy trials, are bound to make a proper improvement of their trials—to be thankful—humble—joyful—faithful and bold.

QUESTION.

When a person is admitted into a church, it is on credible evidence, that he is a true christian.—Now can this connexion be dissolved by excommunication, unless this evidence be destroyed in the minds of them who admitted him to their number?

E. A.

RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

PALESTINE MISSION.

Messrs. Fisk and King were in Egypt about three months, during which time they distributed, or gave away for distribution, 3,700 tracts. They also gave away 256 copies of the Bible or parts of it, and sold 644 (in all 900) for 2378 piastres, or about 183 dollars.

We now commence the description of their journey from Cairo to Jerusalem, in the course of which they passed through the same desert, though not the same part of it, which the children of Israel passed through, when escaping from Egyptian bondage to the promised land of their inheritance and rest.

Commencement of the Journey.

Monday, April 7, 1823. Soon after sunrise an Arab Shekh came with our camels. We had engaged 13, and were to pay six dollars and a half for each, for the journey from Cairo to Jaffa. Four were for ourselves and servant, one for our guide Mustapha, one for water, one for provisions, four for our trunks of books and clothes, and two for the books of the Bible Society and the Jews' Society. We had purchased four goat skins and four leather bottles, in which to carry our water.

We had hoped to find a caravan going through the desert, but finding it not likely that one would go for some weeks, we prepared to set out alone.

At 9 o'clock we took leave of Mr. Salt and his family, and rode out of town; and after arranging our baggage, commenced our journey at ten in regular order for Syria. As we started, a Turkish Dervish and two or three others joined our caravan. We passed a little way from Matarieh, and the obelisk of On or Heriopolis. Till one o'clock we rode in the edge of the wilderness, with its immense extent stretching away to the right, and the fertile plains of the Nile to the left.—At one our road led us into the fields, but still near the desert. At nearly 4 o'clock, after riding more than five hours, course E. N. E. we pitched our tent on the sandy plain near the village of Abu-Sabel. Here a number of

Mussulmans and several Armenians joined our caravan. They had been waiting at the village for a caravan to pass, with which they might go through the desert.

In the evening we observed the Monthly Concert of Prayer.

Tuesday, 8. We arose at 5, and at 6 resumed our journey. At 8, we passed a village in a large grove of palm-trees. At half past 11, having rode on with our guide, trotting our camels till we were almost out of sight of the caravan, we stopped to rest under the shade of a tree. Here we felt the force and saw the beauty of the comparison, "like the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." The caravan came up in half an hour, and we went on. At one, after riding seven hours, course N. and N. E. we pitched our tent on the road near the village Bilbes. Found the thermometer in our tent at 85 degrees. In our room at Cairo it had been for some time from 70 to 76 degrees. We have hitherto had fertile fields on our left hand, and the barren desert on our right. In looking off upon the desert we have observed at a distance the appearance of water. The illusion is perfect, and did we know that it is a mere illusion, we should confidently say that we saw water. It sometimes appears like a lake, and sometimes like a river. As you approach it, it recedes or vanishes. Thus are the hopes of this world, and the objects which men ardently pursue, false and illusive as the streams of the desert.

Account of the Caravan.

Wednesday, 9. Bilbes being the last village before crossing the desert, our attendants were employed in getting things for themselves and their beasts, and we did not set off till half past nine. Several Turks, Arabs and Armenians here joined our caravan. After entering the desert, we counted the persons belonging to the caravan, and found the whole number 74, with 44 camels, 57 asses, one mule, and one horse. Several of the camels are loaded with merchandize, and most of the camel drivers perform the whole journey on foot. It may be interesting to some of our friends to see a list of oriental names, and to learn with what a

"mixed multitude," we passed through the "great and terrible wilderness."

There were *Mussulman Dervishes*, viz: Hadgi Mustapha, of Jerusalem; Hadgi Abnool, Hadgi Khaleel (i. e. the beloved,) Hadgi Saveer, from Bokkaria; Hadgi Kahman (i. e. the merciful) Hadgi Mohammed, and Abdallah (i. e. the slave or servant of God) from near Astrachan.

Arabs—Mustapha, our guide and the Shekh of the carayan; Ismael (Ishmael) and Abdool Assiz (the slave of the Excellent,) who own a part of the camels; and Hadgi Ahmed, the conductor of a part of the caravan. Among the camel-drivers on foot were Moses, Mahommed of El Arish, Hassan, Hadgi Ibrahim (Abraham,) Mahommed of Gaza, Said, Khaleel, Mahommed, a lad, and Selim and Saliua, two Bedouins.

Turks—Hadgi Ibrahim, of Damascus. [He was attended by a black Eunuch, and his form and size would seem to mark him out as a son of Anak. "He seemed built like a tower." Three soldiers from Erzeroum; Hadgi Suleiman (Solomon) of Dearbeker, Hadgi Younas (Jonas) of Bagdad; and Hadgi Mahmoud.

Armenians—Boghas (Paul) from Smyrna; one from Constantinople; Boghas and three others from Koordistan; and Tameer, who passed for a Turkish soldier, but told us privately that he was an Armenian.

Greeks—One from Tocat, where Martyn died, one from Anatolia, (neither of whom speak any thing but Turkish,) and Elias, a Catholic Maronite from Nazareth.

There were, also, eight women; one the mother of Elias, three Turkish, one an Arab, and three negro slaves.

At half past two, after riding five hours, we pitched our tent on the plain called Rode el Wolten. Thermometer in our tent at 79 degrees. Asked the Dervish Hadgi Mustapha what a Dervish is. He replied, "One that eats what he has to day, and trusts God for the future." "Are they priests?" "They are among Turks what priests are among Christians." "Are they Monks? or can they marry?" "Some marry, others not, as they please."—The term Hadgi, which occurs so often in the above list of names, means pilgrim, and is a title given by the Turks to all who have performed the pilgrimage to Mecca. The Greeks have adopted the word into their language,

and bestowed the title upon all who have made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

Journey in the Desert.

Most of the time to day we have been rising a gentle ascent, course E. and N. E. We are now in the desert, out of sight of the inhabited world.—Its appearance, however, is not so perfectly barren, as we expected to find it. Almost every where we see thistles, grass, and flowers, growing out of the sand, though thinly scattered, of stunted growth, and of a dry and withered look. When we stop, we select a good spot for our encampment, raise our tent on its two poles; and stretch out the ropes and fasten them to the earth with pins, and then arrange our trunks and boxes of books, so that they serve us for tables, chairs, and bedsteads.

Thursday, 10. When the caravan stops, the camels are turned out to feed on the thistles, weeds, and grass, which the desert produces. At sunset they are assembled, and made to lie down around the encampment. Yesterday afternoon four of them, which carried merchandise for an Armenian, went off, and could not be found. Two or three men were despatched in search of them. This morning they were not found, and we arranged our baggage so as to give the Armenian one of ours. The rest of the company, also, gave him assistance in carrying his baggage, and we set off at seven. Saw a mountain at a great distance on our right, and a village far off on our left. In the course of the day the four camels were found at a distance, and brought into the encampment at evening. At 2, after 7 hours travelling, we pitched our tent at Mahsima. Thermometer in the tent 84 degrees, in the sun 104 degrees.—Here is a well of what we call here in the desert, good water. The goat-skins which we took to carry water in, were new and have given the water a reddish color, and an exceeding loathsome taste.

In the evening they found, that the butter, which they had put up at Cairo for their journey, had, like the manna which the Israelites kept over night, "bred worms," so that they could not eat it.

Thrice, during the forenoon of the next day, the passports of the different companies composing the caravan were demanded, by Arab soldiers, patrolling this part of the desert for the purpose of stopping travellers who were destitute of passports. One of the soldiers had in his arms a beautiful Gazelle, which at a distance looked like a young deer.

Far off on our right hand, we saw a range of mountains. Our course in the morning was nearly E. ; afterwards it varied to nearly N. At 2, after more than seven hours travel, we pitched our tent at Jissar. Those places in the desert where there are wells, or where caravans are accustomed to encamp, have in consequence received names.— We give the names as they were repeated to us by our guide. Our road hitherto has been alternately loose, moveable sand, and hard sand mixed with gravel.

The singular combination of events, described in the following paragraph, took place during this day.

After some refreshment, we took a Persian Testament, and Genesis in Arabic, and went to Hadgi Mohammed, the Dervish. We sat down with him on his blanket spread on the sand, with the sun beating on our heads, and then showed him our books. He reads well in Persian and Arabic. Of the other Dervishes, not one knows how to read. While we were reading with him, most of the Dervishes, and several Turks and Armenians, gathered around and listened. Mohammed read in Genesis, and said it was *very good*. Another Turk then took it, and read that God *rested* on the seventh day, and said angrily, that it was infidelity to say that God *rested*. Mr. Wolf tried to explain, but to no purpose, till he said he had given such a book to the Mufti of Jerusalem, who said it was good. This argument silenced him at once. We gave the book of Genesis to Mahommed. While we were sitting with him, Elias the Maronite began to beat his mother, because she did not cook his victuals as he wished. Mr. Wolf went to him, and reproved him severely for such conduct. The turks said *tauntingly*, “ He is a Christian.” We were glad they heard

Mr. Wolff’s admonition, in which he shewed them how inconsistent his behavior was with the commands of the Gospel. The unnatural man at length relented, and went to his mother and kissed her hand in token of acknowledgment. Towards evening two Turks had a dispute which finally led to blows. Hadgi Ibrahim (the Anakite) interfered, and, by loud words and a few blows settled the quarrel. After this, the Dervish Mustapha became very angry with his ass, and, like Balaam, fell to beating him, and concluded by calling him a *Jew*.

During the next day, they beheld several flocks of sheep and goats, guarded by Bedouin shepherds, and feeding on the scanty vegetation which the wilderness affords. One of the flocks, from which our travellers purchased a lamb, contained about 300 sheep and goats. The shepherd and two boys were spinning cotton with a small spindle, as they walked about surrounded by the objects of their care. They also met a caravan of 150 camels going to Cairo.

As they proceeded in a northeasterly direction, they found less vegetation, and more sand and hills than heretofore.

The necessity for their travelling on the sabbath, was imperious, they being in the midst of the desert, four days from any human dwelling, with a scanty supply of provisions, with no water which was not exceedingly offensive, and with a company of 70 persons, who would all be likely to suffer by delay. In the afternoon pitched their tents near a grove of palm-trees.

Monday, 14. Hitherto we had generally enjoyed a refreshing north wind, which has served to mitigate the heat, and rendered our journey less tedious, than we had feared it would be. This morning a strong scorching wind from the S. E. commenced. It was indeed distressing. The air sometimes seemed as if it issued from the mouth of an oven. Many of the Arabs bound a handkerchief over their mouths and

noses, as a defence against it. After riding six hours and a half, we pitched our tent on the plain of Loolia, near a well of miserable water. The thermometer in our tent stood at 99 degree. The country we passed was full of sand hills. The wind sometimes blew the sand over the hills like snow in a storm. This has been a dreadful day.

To avoid the heat of the day, they arose at midnight, and resumed their journey at one in the morning. They continued travelling till noon.

The wind continued from S. E. during the night, and we anticipated another dreadful day. But in the forenoon it changed to the S. W. and we were refreshed by a cooling breeze.—The night was so cloudy that not a star appeared. The loaded camels, which during the day travel like a flock, were all tied together when we travelled in the night. One is surprised to see how the Arabs, who are accustomed to the desert, will find their way in a dark night. After 11 hours ride, we pitched our tent at Aboo Jilbana. After the heat of yesterday, and our ride last night, we all find ourselves unwell.

On the Shore of the Mediterranean.

Wednesday, 16. Resumed our journey at five in the morning. Soon came upon a harder road than we had found for several days. It was at no great distance from the Sea. The salt water had overflowed it, and had been evaporated by the sun, leaving a considerable thickness of salt on the ground.—At 2, we came upon the shore of the Mediterranean, where the waves were rolling, and foaming, and breaking, in a most beautiful and majestic manner. Turning from the sea-shore, and passing over a mountain of sand, we came in a little while to El Arish, a village situated in the desert. At Messaoudia, a watering place on the sea-shore, the caravan separated, and one part took a different route for Gaza. After riding ten hours and a half, we pitched our tent on the plain near the village. Our shekh belongs to this place. When he and his attendants met with their friends we had an opportunity to observe a curious mode of salutation.—They took each other by the hand, put their foreheads together and smacked

their lips, but without bringing their faces in contact. They repeated this joining of foreheads and distant kissing four or five times, saying, "Peace;" "Well;" "Thank God;" "How are you?" "Thank God?" "Peace." "God give you peace." "God bless you."

In conversation with the Greek, who is from Tocat, he told us that there are in that place 100 or 150 Greek houses, a bishop, six priests, and two churches. One priest is from Greece, and knows Greek; the rest understand only Turkish, though they perform their service in Greek, repeating the words, parrot-like, without understanding them.

Messrs. Fisk and King represent the Arabs as exceedingly profane in respect to the divine Name, using it with very little reverence and continually invoking it in confirmation of trifles and falsehoods.

They now began to witness some cultivated fields, and a degree of verdure, for which the sandy hills of the desert were gratefully exchanged.—About the middle of the next day, which was Friday, and the twelfth since leaving Cairo, they had a shower of rain. Soon after they crossed the valley of Zaaka.

Entrance into Syria.

After riding nine hours and a half, we pitched our tent at Burel Koor, a large plain covered with grass and shrubs, on which several large flocks of sheep and goats were feeding, under the direction of Arab shepherds and shepherdesses.—We walked up to the top of a sand hill near our tent, where we had a delightful view of the plain. After being so long in the wilderness, this view was indeed cheering. We have now just left the dominions of Mohammed Ali Pasha, and entered modern Syria. Whether we are yet within the limits of ancient Palestine, or not, we do not know. The valley of Zaaka is no doubt a torrent in the rainy season. Possibly this is the river of Egypt. See Gen. xv, 18, and Josh. xv, 4. If so, we are already in the promised land. While in the desert, we have found comfort in singing,

Guide me, O thou great Jehovah,
Pilgrim through this barren land.

From the top of the hill, near our tent, we lifted up our eyes and looked "northward and southward, and eastward," and thought of the dangers we had escaped, and of the prospect before us. How trying it must have been to Moses, after wandering forty years in the wilderness, to be told that he must not enter the good land which his eyes beheld. In the evening read the 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th chapters of Deuteronomy, which were extremely interesting to us at this time. We are now entering the land of Canaan.

Saturday, 19. In the morning we found that some bold Bedouin had made his way into our encampment, and carried off a saddle. Mustapha went out, and, finding a Bedouin, charged him with stealing it, and began to chastise him. He gave a signal, and a number of armed Bedouins made their appearance at a distance. The surrounding country was full of them; and, as all would be likely to unite together in case of a disturbance, it was thought prudent to leave them in quiet possession of the saddle, and to proceed as soon as possible. At 8, the caravan moved off the ground. As we proceeded, we found a gradual increase of vegetation, and cultivated fields became more frequent.—At half past 10, we passed a well of water and some ruins. Two pillars of grey granite were standing. The place is called *Rufa*. This is probably the ancient Rophia, which was the first town in Syria. Rhinocalura (probably El Arish) being the last in Egypt. At half past 11, after crossing a mountain which is called on one of our maps a continuation of Mount Seir, we came to the village Khan Yoanas (the Inn of Jonas,) the first village we have seen in Syria. It is surrounded by gardens, and is inhabited by Mussulmans, who have a tradition that the Prophet Jonas once was here. East of it on a hill is another Mussulman village.

From Khan Yoanas we travelled several hours over a wide and beautiful plain, filled with herds of camels, sheep and goats, which were generally tended by Bedouin women. This is the ancient land of the Philistines.—Here we were continually harassed by the Bedouins, who seemed to spring up like Hydras in every corner.

Missionary Herald.

ORDINATIONS AND INSTALLATIONS.

The Rev. ELAM C. CLARK was, on the 13th of April, ordained over the Pacific Congregational Church and Society, in Providence. Introductory Prayer by the Rev. Mr. Wisner, of Boston; Sermon by the Rev. Thomas M^r Auley, D. D. L. L. D. of N. York; Consecrating Prayer by the Rev. Mr. Williston, of East-Hampton, Mass.; the Charge by the Rev. Dr. Patten, of Newport; the Righthand of Fellowship by the Rev. Mr. Wood, of Barrington and the Concluding Prayer by the Rev. Mr. Holmes, of New-Bedford.

February 4, the Rev. RUFUS AUSTIN PUTNAM was ordained over the Church in Fitchburg. Introductory Prayer by the Rev. Ebenezer Perkins; Sermon by the Rev. John M. Putnam, from 1 Thes. 2, 4. Consecrating Prayer by the Rev. David Palmer; Charge by the Rev. Cyrus Mann; Fellowship of the churches by the Rev. Alonzo Phillips; Address to the people by the Rev. E. L. Clark; Concluding Prayer by the Rev. George Fisher.

April 21, the Rev. MOSES PATRIDGE was ordained over the Second Church in Plymouth; Introductory Prayer by the Rev. Mr. Hemenway of Wareham; Sermon by the Rev. Mr. Ide of Midway, from 1 Thes. 5, 25, *Pray for us*. Consecrating Prayer by the Rev. Mr. Cobb of Rochester; Charge to the Pastor by the Rev. Mr. Wright of Carver; Fellowship of the Churches by the Rev. Mr. Hunn; Address to the Church by the Rev. Mr. Cobb, concluding prayer by the Rev. Mr. Lincoln of Falmouth.

April 28, the Rev. PRINCE HAWES was installed Pastor of the Evangelical Church, in South Boston. Sermon by the Rev. Mr. Wisner, from 1 Cor. 9, 16.

The Rev. ARTEMAS BOYES has been recently installed Pastor of the Church, in South Hadley. Sermon by Rev. Mr. Osgood of Springfield.

ERRORS IN THE 4TH NO.

P. 103, first col. 1st line from the bottom, for *foundation* read *fountain*—p. 106, second col. 20th line from the top, for *fully and clearly* read *truly and fairly*—p. 107, first col. 10th line from the top, for *life* read *hope*.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

F. Mathetes, Alethes and Theophilus are received.

THE
CHRISTIAN MAGAZINE.

VOL. I.

JUNE, 1824.

No. 6.

ORIGINAL COMMUNICATIONS.

MAN A FREE, MORAL, AND ACCOUNTABLE AGENT.

The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews, in the beginning of the 6th chapter of that epistle, says, "Leaving therefore the first principles of the oracles of God, let us go on unto perfection." There are then first principles of the oracles of God. These are fundamental truths, which ought to be well understood and firmly established in our minds, to guard us against falling into error in subordinate questions of doctrine and duty.

That man is a free and moral agent, and accountable to God for all that he does, is one of these first principles. This must be understood and held as incontrovertible. If this be rejected, nothing of any value can be retained. If this be not fixed in our minds, as a certain principle, it is not to be expected that a conviction of our utter sinfulness, and of the absolute necessity of our being saved with the salvation of the gospel, will have any deep hold of our feelings.—We shall rather treat as idle tales all the denunciations of the Bible,

and all the expostulations of the preacher.

Scarce any subject has more engaged the enquiries, or divided the opinions of logicians and metaphysicians than this. Elaborate treatises have been published, and from the hands of men of the first order for intellectual talent, and careful research. Yet it is to be doubted, whether the subject has been cleared of all difficulties. Perplexities still exist in the minds of many, and objections continue to be urged. Whether any thing can be added to disembarass the subject is perhaps problematical. If there can, it is apprehended, it must be by beginning precisely at the proper point of enquiry, and by removing from the discussion all irrelevant considerations.

The enquiry, it is conceived, does not properly respect the will of man or any other property of his nature, abstractly considered. This has indeed been rather the subject of controversy. And the celebrated first Edwards of our country has written an ingenious, and if we may judge from the en-

fire failure of the attempts which have hitherto been made to invalidate his reasoning, an unanswerable treatise on this very question, whether the will of man be free. But strictly speaking, neither freedom nor the opposite appears to be predicable of the will abstractly considered, or as an attribute of the man.

If the term *will* be taken for the *faculty* of choosing and refusing, a sense in which it is perhaps most commonly used, there will be a serious difficulty in ascertaining the nature of this faculty. Such a faculty is indeed implied in the known fact that we choose. But we know no more of it as a faculty, and in regard to its specific nature, than we do of that of thinking, feeling, enjoying and suffering. If we predicate liberty or the opposite of this faculty, then no conceivable idea will be expressed by the terms we use.

If the term *will* be taken for that spontaneous election of which we are conscious, when we choose or refuse, then it expresses an act of the agent, not a power of acting. But it is impossible, in the nature of things, that voluntary action should be coerced in a sense the opposite of moral liberty.

The enquiry properly is, whether *man* personally considered in possession of all his faculties, is a free agent. The will is not the agent. It is not the will, abstractly considered, that is under law and accountable; that is to be justified or condemned. It is the

man who thinks, feels and acts.—

The question then is, Is man a free and moral agent? Or, to state the matter perhaps more correctly—Does he act? Does he act freely? Does he act morally?

1. Does he act? What must be meant in this case by acting? To get rid of obligation, blame, and accountability, men have often treated acting as mere motion.—But there is an essential difference between action, and mere motion. Action belongs to mind; motion, to matter. Motion is a mere relative change, of which any thing, whether animate or inanimate, is a subject, comprehending neither intelligence, choice, nor motive. It is an involuntary effect which is brought to pass by some extraneous cause. Thus the wheels of a watch move involuntarily, without thought or motive, by the elastic power of the spring. And the waters of the ocean move by the power of the winds.

It is true, we sometimes use the word act with respect to these secondary causes of motion. We say that heat acts upon water when evaporation is produced.—But the word, in this application of it, is used in a figurative sense. There is some resemblance to our senses between what appears of mere motion and voluntary action. And the word which properly expresses the one, by a natural transposition, passes metaphorically to express the other.

Action, in the proper sense of the term, can be predicated of

those beings, only who think, who have an object in view, and who cannot only be capable of choosing, but do in fact, choose.

We are all perfectly acquainted with action in this proper sense of the term. Our fellow-men are perpetually acting before our eyes. We see them in the pursuit of their various objects, and bringing effects to pass. We have full evidence that they have these objects, and the reasons for pursuing them before their minds; and therefore that they pursue them by choice or voluntarily. We reason with them. We endeavour to persuade them to desist from what they are doing, or to do something which we wish to have them do. This, if we had any serious question whether they are properly active beings, would be preposterous.

We are conscious, that we ourselves are intelligent; that we have certain objects of our thought before us, that we do choose or refuse one or more of these objects. And if they are desirable, and in our view attainable, we pursue them overtly, sometimes with great eagerness and industry. In short, we have full as much evidence that we act, as that any inanimate substances move. Nor can we conceive that any intelligent creatures should, in the possession of any power whatever, or by any circumstance, be more properly active than men are. If an angel were to become incarnate, and to act in our view with the

superior powers which we suppose him to possess, whatever effects he might bring to pass, we cannot conceive that any thing would appear, which would manifest him to be an active being beyond what appears with respect to ourselves. We discern nothing in our Lord Jesus Christ, either in respect to his humanity or his divinity, which proved his activity any more than our own activity is proved to ourselves and others, by what we in fact do. One active being may have powers superior to another, and, in the application of those powers, bring to pass what the other cannot.—But this will add nothing to the proof of his activity. Even, if we were perfectly independent of God as he is of us, we cannot conceive how that should make us more active beings, than we now are. It ought to be observed here that our actions have their seat and spring in the internal principles of our nature, in the will and affections, which we sometimes denominate the *heart*. They may be internal only, and not become manifest in their open expressions, so as to become subject to the observation of others. Thus a man may hate his neighbor, and form the resolution to murder him, whenever a favorable opportunity shall occur. This resolution remains with him for months. It does not appear in the actual killing of his neighbor, because the opportunity has not occurred. His purpose is known to

God and himself only. By the laws of civil society, he has not acted in this matter, and is innocent. In the sight of God, and according to his law, he acts and is guilty as really as if the killing had taken place. We are expressly told that he who hateth his brother is a murderer. And it is with an evil heart of unbelief that a man departs from the living God.

When the internal act appears in its outward expressions, by the use made of the bodily organs, or in the effect produced, we denominate it executive or overt. Then it comes out to the notice of others. This is a mere circumstance however, and is not essential to action. This distinction does not imply, as some seem to have conceived, that there are two actions in any given case; for example, in the case of the purpose to kill, and the execution of the purpose in actually killing; the one an internal, and the other an external action. If it were so, the man, in the latter case, would be chargeable with a double murder, or two acts of murder. When the action is overt, it is still but one act of the agent. All the difference is, that it now appears in an executive form. Upon this ground it would seem that we always act, except when we are asleep, or are deprived of our reason. Though we do not always act overtly, we do act, by internal voluntary exercises.

II. The next enquiry is—Does man act *freely*? It is necessary to ascertain here, what we mean by acting freely.

If by acting freely, be meant acting independently of the purpose and causal agency of God, which seems to be the thing really intended by at least the most of those who call the moral freedom of man into question, it must be admitted at once, that man does not act freely. There is but one independent being in the universe. God, and God only, is independent. The whole universe besides, proceeding from his powerful word, is, and necessarily must be, in a state of absolute dependence on him. Every angel, devil, man, and worm, every atom, and every modification of atoms, every mind, and every modification of mind, must be in a state of dependence on him. Man is a creature, and therefore, in all respects, and at every moment dependent. If man must be independent of God in any point of view in order to his acting freely, then the simple fact, that he is a creature, presents him as a passive machine, and proves it impossible that he should have any moral relations to God, or to his fellow man. Upon the principle that dependence is inconsistent with freedom of action, more or less, it was impossible that God should create and keep in existence, moral and free agents; that he should have any creatures whatever, to whom he could give

law, and whom he could rule by a moral government. And as moral agents are the only sort of creatures capable of an amiable moral character, of a social moral intercourse, and of real valuable enjoyment, it was impossible that he should gratify his infinite benevolence in the production and sustentation of a system, agreeing in its nature with that benevolence.

By acting freely, is it meant that man, by some imagined self-determining power, must be the efficient cause of his own actions? This involves the palpable absurdity, that a man must act in order that he may begin to act. This self-contradictory hypothesis, the first President Edwards, in his treatise on the will, has so fully exposed, that one would think it never can again be resorted to, as entitled to any serious consideration.

By acting freely is it meant that men must act without a governing motive, or in a state of entire mental indifference, or without preferring one thing to another? This is also impossible. For action and indifference are opposites.

What then can, in reason, be meant by acting freely? There is something intended by these terms, which properly belong to the subject. It is important to ascertain with precision, what this something is, that the subject may not be embarrassed by words without meaning, and actions wholly imaginary.

Let it then be observed, that the words *free, freely* and *freedom*, have a correlate signification, and that they have properly a negative import, or are a denial of an involuntary, compulsory restraint. This account of the matter has the authority of that most acute metaphysician the late Dr. Edwards, who is thought to have discussed this subject with more accuracy than any preceding writer. Freedom is the opposite of natural force, of being confined by some extraneous agency to a state from which we would break loose if we could. The slave is not free with respect to the coercion of his master's holding him in bondage. He is restrained forcibly from going abroad whither he will, and is constrained to do things to which he is averse. The master may not be free with respect to some other man, who may, by an equal exercise of power, constrain him.

"How sayest thou," said the Jews to Jesus, "Ye shall be made free? We were never in bondage to any man!" Freedom and bondage are opposites. Freedom in man then with respect to his actions can have respect to nothing but some internal coercive hindrance to which the will is opposed. If man does just what he chooses to do, he is free. If he is under no internal restraint to obstruct the accomplishment of his desires, he enjoys freedom, whether he uses his freedom or not. If

he is under a good law, that cannot abridge his freedom whether he obeys or transgresses that law.—For freedom is not licentiousness; and he ought to do what a good law requires. It is true that a man may, or may not be free with respect to gratifying his wishes, or carrying his purposes into effect. And his freedom or want of freedom corresponds exactly with what we mean by natural ability and inability, power and the want of power. A man is in prison.—The doors of his prison are locked upon him. In this case he is not free to go out, or has not power to go out. Suppose the doors of his prison are opened before him, and he has full permission from the authority which put him there to leave the prison. In this case he is free, or has power to go out. Nothing else can be meant by acting freely, but acting in complete exemption from all such compulsory constraint or hindrance.—It is presumed that we can have no conception of any other freedom which can possibly be predicated of an intelligent being.

Now, though from this simple statement of the inquiry, it may seem to most readers obvious enough that man acts freely, yet it may be useful to make some remarks, farther to illustrate the subject, and to prove the truth of the position, that he does so.

I. It may be observed that it is essential to the nature of all such actions as are attributable to men who act always with intelligence

and by motive, that they are freely done. Action and the freedom of action are, in the nature of things, inseparable, or the one always and necessarily involves the other. With respect to action as it is merely internal, within the man, it is obvious that it is impossible that he should be subject to any involuntary constraint. The supposition of such a constraint is a self-contradiction. With respect to action executively considered, or as it is overt, proceeding to the accomplishment of the purpose that has been formed within, he certainly acts freely. By the supposition that he actually proceeds to execute his purpose, he is subject to no involuntary restraint.

If he is hindered from doing what he would do, did not this hindrance exist, in such a case, and so far, he does not act. Action always ends where involuntary hindrance begins. The one is directly inconsistent with the other. The bare consideration of action in an intelligent creature then, proves that whenever, and so far as he really acts, he acts freely. You cannot get the idea of the opposite from such a bare inspection of its nature. You may deduce it as an inference from a doctrine or argument—but this is reasoning. It may be correct or incorrect. If the inference be justly drawn it will certainly overthrow the doctrine or argument. For no doctrine can be true, no argument can hold, which is subversive of the reality and the freedom of hu-

man action. No doctrine, nor manner of arguing can hold against an unquestionable fact. If the inference be unjustly drawn it will disprove neither the doctrine on the one hand, nor the fact, on the other.

II. We have the evidence which arises from our own consciousness that we act freely. By saying that we are conscious that we always act freely, I rather mean, that we are not conscious of any thing within us or without us, which is the least abridgement of our freedom. We are not conscious of any constraint or force acting compulsorily within, or controlling us without, so far as we act. We are conscious that when we are outwardly constrained, as we sometimes are, so far we do not act. We are moved involuntarily, and therefore passively, forward and backward, this way and that, by an extraneous power, which belongs not to us, but to some other being. Such consciousness is proof strong and incontrovertible that we act freely. We must always remember that whether we act virtuously or viciously, benevolently or maliciously, are depraved or holy, makes, in this case, no difference. For the question of our liberty of action depends not in the least upon the moral quality of our actions.

III. We inevitably treat each other as acting freely. The man who has gone the farthest, either in the notion of chance, on the one hand, or fatalism on the other ;

he who even denies the being of God, and the accountability of man, proceeds, and must proceed, in all the intercourse of life, upon the principle that men act freely. Let him try to put the opposite principle into practice. Let those who would remove accountability from man, in the pretence that he acts mechanically, and not freely, try what their doctrine will do in the intercourse of life. Let them try to treat their fellow-men as so many statues. Let them go on to reason with them as such, and they will appear ridiculous enough.— Let them cease forever to require, to approve and condemn, to remonstrate and to persuade ; let them treat those who slander and defraud ; insult and abuse them, who rob and destroy wherever they go, as mere mechanical things, entirely without moral freedom, and therefore no more in fault than the winds and the waves ; as incapable, from the mere passivity of their natures, of law and government. They cannot do it. They are under a necessity of contradicting their principles in their own practice. This necessity, arising from the known and certain constitution of things, of our treating each other as acting freely proves that we do so.

IV. A conclusive proof on this subject to those who admit the divine authority of the Bible, is, that the Bible proceeds from beginning to end, in all its instructions, precepts, threats and promises, its

distinctions of character, its approving and condemnatory sentences, upon this principle. Go through the Bible, and not a passage or a fact will be found but proclaims this as the determination of infallible wisdom. All the remonstrances and injunctions of God towards the people of Israel, all his providential dealings with them for their sins, of which the Bible gives us a history, the appearance and doctrines of Christ, his manner of treating his disciples and the world, his atonement and the whole work of redemption, the system of discipline to which he subjects his own people, and the entire process and issue of the last judgment, as set before us by Christ and his Apostles, proceed undeniably upon this principle as no more to be questioned than our existence. It were vain to quote particular passages. It is plain that this principle is acted upon in God's treatment of mankind as fully as it is acted upon by men with respect to each other; by masters towards their servants, by parents towards their children, and by princes towards their subjects.

V. It does not seem possible to vindicate the rectitude of the providence of God in the denial of this principle. Innumerable calamities do in fact rest upon mankind. These calamities are so many, so frequent, and often so severe, as apparently to justify the scriptural and common remark, that "man is born unto trouble even as the

sparks fly upwards." No man who is not an atheist will doubt that these calamities take place under the hand of God. "There is no evil in the city but the Lord hath done it." God in his word assigns to us the reason. The reason is entirely governmental. It is because man is a sinner. "Death hath passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." This explanation is the only one that can be given, and it is perfectly satisfactory. Remove this reason, and an awful cloud of the thickest darkness is over the whole of divine providence, God afflicts and destroys without reason. There is no medium, therefore, between a virtual atheism, and the acknowledgement that man acts freely.

I think it important to observe here, that if man is a free agent in any measure, he is so perfectly. No reservations are to be made. For, however it may be with respect to man towards his fellow-man, that he may be partly free and partly bond, nothing of this kind can exist with respect to man as a subject of God's moral government. He cannot be, in his actions, partly bond and partly free. For there is no medium between perfect freedom of action and mechanical instrumentality.—Every proof that has been produced to shew that man is a free agent, and not a mere mechanical instrument, determines that he acts, not with partial and imperfect, but with full and perfect freedom. It is very clear that

God treats man in this light, in all the instructions of his word and in all the measures of his government.

To remove all pretence of the opposite, I judge it is important to remark farther, that man acts as freely as he could act, if he were as holy and as high in rank as an angel; as if he had an enlargement of his natural powers an hundred fold; even as if he were perfectly independent of his Creator, as he is, in this respect, of his fellow creatures. We cannot conceive how the angels of heaven can act more freely than man does. Nor can we conceive how God himself can act more freely.

And, with respect to any other hypothesis that was ever suggested, or can be imagined, we do not perceive how it could secure freedom of action any more than man enjoys in a state of entire dependence. Take the ground of atheism, and any species of atheism. Suppose man to act from a blind invincible fatality, or the opposite, by chance, that is, without any antecedent reason or cause, within or without himself of acting as he does, do we gain any thing by either of these suppositions? Can we conceive of him as doing more than we have considered him as doing, than as acting from some motive, with entire voluntariness, and without any involuntary constraint? Take the ground of the Arminian, who denies the purpose and governmental agency of God, with respect

to human action; and asserts, and endeavors to maintain, that man has a self-determining power, in the exercise of which he previously determines, and is properly the cause, of his own actions. Be it so, suppose him to be possessed of such a self-determining power, what is the exercise of this power determining a following action, but itself acting in view of a motive, with perfect voluntariness, and in an exemption from all external involuntary restraint? And what is this following action thus determined? Is it any thing more?—No. Then nothing is or can be gained by any hypothesis different from that of man's entire dependence on his Creator.

III. In all this freedom of action men are *moral* agents, or they act *morally*. Their actions go to form a moral character. The reason of it is, that man is capable of perceiving clearly the essential and immutable difference which there is between right and wrong, morally considered; between the right of benevolence, and the wrong of malevolence, as exercised and expressed towards God and his creatures; and that he is under the law of God, his moral governor, which requires the one and forbids the other, and can understand and feel his obligation according to this law.—These necessarily imply each other. Moral action necessarily implies a rule according to which it is to be estimated, as right or wrong. And obligation supposes

that this rule is a law authoritatively imposed, which acts upon the conscience and binds the agent. In this, man is eminently distinguished from the lower animals, to which therefore we never impute moral right or wrong. They think, and feel, and choose, and produce effects, some of which are favorable, and some disastrous. But they have no knowledge of God, of a moral government exercised by him, of right and wrong as forming moral character, and constituting moral desert. They therefore never do, in fact, and never can, choose moral good as such, or moral evil as such. They are not accountable ; they are not to be reasoned with as capable of being influenced by moral motives. So we inevitably treat them, and so God treats them. He has not placed them under law, or made them accountable. They are governed by their instincts and their appetites. Man God has placed under law. This law is the rule of his duty and of his accountability. The instructions of the scripture place this beyond all controversy. But it is made evident also by facts, and by the necessity of the case. We inevitably treat each other as acting morally. We cannot exist in a state of society upon an opposite principle. A law cannot be in force but upon this ground. For an enactment cannot exist with the force of a law without a penalty expressing and securing the authority of the lawgiver. The pen-

alty implies and enforces obligation. And submitting to this obligation, or resisting it necessarily forms moral character and moral desert. No contract can be entered into, and become binding between individuals for business or for any other purpose ; I cannot even enter into your door, as a neighbor, by your consent, but upon the ground that you are a moral agent, and are obliged to that which is morally right, and to abstain from that which is morally wrong. By bidding me to enter in the manner of a friend, you voluntarily assume moral obligation and responsibility. You tacitly, but unequivocally confirm that most equitable and necessary law of God, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

In short, it is an unalterable law of our nature that we should *act*, that we should act *freely*, and that we should act *morally*. We can no more escape forming a moral character and being subjects of moral desert, than we can escape from our shadow or cease thinking. And it is presumed that the opposite would never be seriously entertained, if it were not sought for as a refuge from guilt, and an instrument of opposition to unwelcome truth.

EVERY PERSON'S SALVATION OR DESTRUCTION DEPENDS ON HIS OWN WILL.

In order to understand the subject of this communication, it is necessary to explain what is meant

by the assertion, that it depends upon a person's own will, whether he shall be saved or lost. This means, in general, that it depends upon every one's choice, whether he shall be saved or lost. If a person chooses the water of life, he shall have it; or if he refuses the water of life he shall not have it. Or, to drop the metaphor, if he chooses to be saved in the way, which God has devised and revealed in the gospel, he shall be saved: But if he refuses to be saved in that way, he shall be finally lost. God has established an infallible connection between every person's choice in this life, and his everlasting state in the next; or he has made the choice of his heart the condition, upon which he shall be forever happy or miserable. If he chooses the holiness and happiness of heaven, he shall be admitted to the enjoyments of heaven forever. But if he refuses those glorious objects, he shall be excluded from heaven, and be consigned to a state of endless sin and woe.— And since God has established and revealed this constitution between the choice of the heart and the future state of the soul, it may be truly said, that it depends entirely upon every person's choice, whether he shall be saved or lost. His choice is the condition, upon which his eternal state absolutely turns. When any thing is freely offered to any man's choice, it may be truly said, that it solely depends upon his choice, whether he shall

have it or not. When a cup of cold water is offered to a thirsty man's choice, it depends upon his choice, whether he shall or shall not have it. When a bribe is offered to the choice of a judge, it depends upon his choice, whether he will open or shake his hand; or, whether he will receive or reject the bribe. When a reward is offered to one, who has done a meritorious action, it depends upon his choice, whether he shall or shall not possess that token of gratitude. But there is an instance in scripture more pertinent, than any that have been mentioned. Solomon told Shimei, that if he chose to stay in the city, he should live; but if he chose to go out of it, he should surely die. In that case, it depended entirely upon Shimei's choice, whether he should live or die. Precisely in the same sense, it depends upon every person's choice, whether he shall be saved or lost. There is not within any person, nor without him any thing, that can possibly prevent his salvation, if he chooses to be saved. Nor is there within any person, nor without him any thing, that can prevent his final destruction, if he finally refuses to be saved. This is what is meant by the assertion, that it depends upon every person's choice, whether he shall be saved or lost.

I now propose to illustrate the truth of this assertion. And we must be convinced, that it does absolutely depend upon every one's will, whether he shall be

saved or lost, if we seriously and impartially consider the following observations.

1. That every person has power to accept or reject the offers of the gospel. Whoever has power to choose or refuse any thing has power to choose or refuse salvation. But we all know that we have power to choose natural good and evil. This power does not consist in a faculty or principle of will, but in a capacity of loving and hating, or choosing and refusing. This capacity entirely consists in the natural faculties of the mind. Not one of these singly, but all unitedly give us the capacity of choosing and refusing. Perception, memory, reason and conscience are the natural faculties of the mind, which constitute us capable of moral exercises. If we were destitute of all these faculties, we could not exercise any affections or volitions. Or if we were destitute of any one of these natural faculties, we could not exercise any affections of a moral nature, or such as are worthy of praise or blame. But since we possess all these faculties, we are completely able to exercise voluntary affections, which are virtuous or vicious. We can love what is lovely, or hate what is lovely. We can hate what is hateful, or love what is hateful. Our perception enables us to perceive the existence of objects. Our memory enables us to retain the knowledge of what we perceive. Our reason enables us to discover the nature,

tendency and connections of objects. And our conscience enables us to discern the moral quality of objects; or to distinguish between right and wrong. And when we perceive the existence, discover the nature, and distinguish the moral quality of any object, we then have the power of choosing or refusing, loving or hating that object. And our choice, our love, or hatred of that object, will be a moral exercise, and either praise or blame-worthy. Thus every person has the power of choosing or refusing salvation. And since God has established an infallible connection between every man's choice and his future state, it must be true, that it depends upon his will or choice, whether he shall enjoy the blessedness of heaven, or suffer the pains of the damned. It is true, indeed, if all men had not the power of choosing or refusing salvation, it could not depend upon their will, whether they should be saved or lost.— This is plainly the case of all creatures, which are inferior to mankind and which have not the power of choosing and refusing moral objects. God cannot, to speak with reverence, make them probationers for eternity, or suspend their happiness or misery in a future state upon their choice in time. But since men are wiser than the beasts of the field and the fowls of heaven, God may place them in a state of probation in this life for their future and eternal condition. And now it not only

may, but must depend upon their own will, whether they shall be happy or miserable forever—for,

2. God freely offers salvation to all under the gospel with an opportunity to accept it. The Bible abounds with invitations to all, without exception, to accept of pardoning mercy. The evangelical Prophet cries, 'Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.' Yea, he calls and invites all, with great tenderness and compassion, to accept of all spiritual blessings. 'Ho, every one, that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat, yea come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.—Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear and come unto me: hear and your soul shall live.' The Lord Jesus Christ in the course of his preaching abundantly called upon sinners in the most melting language to accept of salvation. He said, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." Again it is written—"In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried saying, If any thirst, let him come unto me

and drink." He spake several parables to represent the grace of God in his offers of salvation.—He said, "a certain man made a great supper and bade many: and he sent his servant at suppertime to say to them, that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready." This parable needs no comment. It strikingly illustrates the freeness of the offers, which God makes to sinners in the gospel.—And since Christ has left the world, he invites all to come and receive spiritual blessings from him.—"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice, and open the door I will come in to him and will sup with him and he with me." Again, he says, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." All the time such invitations are made to every person, it must be true, that every person may be saved, if he will. His salvation is entirely suspended upon his own choice. If this were not true, there could be no sincerity in these offers of salvation. It is always absurd to propose any thing to any person, upon impossible or impracticable conditions. If there were any thing to prevent men's choosing or refusing salvation, all the invitations in the gospel would be absolutely absurd and inconsistent with the holy and benevolent character of the Deity. Every invitation to sinners in the gospel carries in it conclusive evidence, that it depends upon their choice, whether they shall accept or re-

ject the offer; and of course whether they shall be saved or lost.

3. God commands as well as invites men to accept salvation, which supposes, that it depends upon their will, whether they shall be finally happy or miserable in a future state. Indeed, all the invitations which God gives to men are clothed with authority; but positive injunctions are frequently added to invitations. Thus Moses, in the name of God, not only sets his invitations, but his commands before his people. "See I have set before you this day life and good, and death and evil."—He adds, "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live." Agreeably to this, Joshua called upon Israel in the name of God, "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve."—Isaiah held the same language to the same people. "Wash ye, make ye clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well." And Ezekiel was commanded to say, "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die." John, the forerunner of Christ, commanded men to receive the glad tidings of salvation. "In those days came John the Baptist preaching in the wilderness of

Judea and saying, repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Christ preached in the same manner. "Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and saying, The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand; Repent ye and believe the gospel." And Paul, agreeably to his commission from Christ to preach the gospel, expressly said, "God now commandeth all men every where to repent." These commands to embrace the gospel plainly imply, that it depends upon every person's will, whether he shall receive or reject the offers of life, or whether he shall be saved or lost. For it would be altogether unjust for God to command any person to do any thing, which did not depend on his will, or which he could not do, if he would. All the commands in the Bible, requiring men to repent, believe, or embrace the gospel, demonstrate, that it does depend upon their choice, whether they shall be saved or lost. Besides,

4. This is further evident from the threatenings of the gospel.—The gospel not only invites and commands, but also threatens.—Our Savior preached the threatenings of the gospel as plainly as its invitations and precepts. He said to the Jews, "Except ye believe, that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." Again he said to his hearers, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." In his last commission to his apostles and

their successors, he said, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned." These are heavy threatenings; and they are denounced against all, who will not come to Christ, that they may have life; who will not accept the offers of the gospel; who will not obey the commands of God; and who reject the counsel of God against themselves. But there would be no justice, nor propriety in these threatenings, if it did not entirely depend upon every one's will, whether he would embrace or reject the offers of eternal salvation. In a word, all the invitations, promises, commands and threatenings of the gospel are founded upon this truth, that it depends absolutely upon every person's will or choice, whether he shall choose life and live, or choose death and die.

This subject suggests one or two remarks.

1. There is a perfect propriety in preaching the gospel to sinners. Though they are opposed to the gospel and therefore it is often thought that it is useless and unsafe to preach the gospel fully and clearly to sinners; yet such preaching is the proper and appointed means for removing their opposition. And it has had this great and happy effect upon all the immense multitude, who have ever believed the gospel and been saved since the fall of Adam. To

preach the gospel fully and clearly to sinners is the proper and special duty of preachers. And by such preaching sinners are treated as rational, accountable and moral agents, and according to their exceedingly affecting and critical situation in this state of trial.—The more fully and clearly the gospel is preached, the more easily and plainly will sinners see that it is a message of life and of death from God to themselves, and the more powerful and pungent will be the motives to accept the offer of life. It is not *preaching*, but it is *the gospel*, *truly, fully and plainly preached*, that sinners must accept, or perish. And this truth sinners as well as saints will see and feel, if preachers will renounce the hidden things of dishonesty and not shun to declare the whole counsel of God.

2. It is impossible for sinners to find any good excuse for neglecting and rejecting the salvation of the gospel. They can find no excuse in God; his character, his decrees, or his agency; nor in his law or gospel, nor in heaven nor in hell; nor in the world, its cares or labors, its temptations or delusions; nor in their fellow-creatures nor in themselves. Every sinner to whom the gospel is sent, has power to accept it, has the most favorable opportunity to accept it; and is bound to accept it by bonds, which neither he nor any other being can ever break. And such sinners, as hear and reject

the gospel, will meet an aggravated condemnation to the endless pains and torments of hell.

JOHN.

THE SELF DENIAL OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

The will of the Lord Jesus Christ, while he was on earth, was in perfect subjection to the will of his Father. He subjected his own will to the will of God, and wholly and cheerfully submitted himself into his hands. He therefore, possessed a spirit of perfect self-denial. This self-denial essentially consisted in his submitting his will to the will of his Father; or in giving up his interest, personally considered, for the glory of God and the interests of his kingdom. Christ had a valuable interest, which he had a right to regard according to its importance, simply considered; and which, so considered, he did properly regard. But he was willing to submit his own interest to a greater and better interest, which was his Father's interest, or the greatest interest of the universe. Accordingly the Apostle gives this account of the self-denial of Jesus Christ. He says, "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye, through his poverty, might be rich." Again he says, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus; who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but

made himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of man; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." In his Epistle to the Hebrews, the Apostle exhorts christians to look unto Jesus, "who, for the joy set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame." This joy was the glory of God in the salvation of sinners, and the highest good of the intellectual system.—He preferred the great interest of the universe to his own; and for the sake of it gave up his own interest. This was submitting his own will to the will of his Father, who, in his eternal counsel, had determined to promote the highest good of the universe, through the incarnation, sufferings and death of the Son of his love.—With this determination Christ was well pleased, because he placed his own good in the good of others. He loved the glory of God and the interest of his moral kingdom more than his own personal happiness, which made him willing to give up a less, for a more important interest. His regard to his own personal interest may be considered *his will*, in distinction from his Father's will, which regarded the great interest of the universe. And his not seeking his own interest, may be considered his not seeking his own will; and his seeking the interest of his Father may be considered as his seek-

ing his Father's will. His will was his interest and his Father's will his Father's interest; and his seeking his Father's will instead of his own, was his seeking his Father's interest instead of his own. Christ saw that his Father had proposed the most important and glorious object, which could not be obtained, unless he made a sacrifice of himself, and gave up his own good for the good of the universe, which his Father was seeking and was engaged & determined to accomplish.

Now, we ought to bear it on our minds, that Christ's self-denial consisted in thus giving up his own real, valuable good, which, simply considered, he ought to regard. This is an idea of self-denial, that is very different from what is often believed and maintained. Some suppose, that self-denial consists in giving up a less personal good for a greater personal good. But this was not Christ's self-denial. Others suppose, that self-denial consists merely in giving up a selfish good for a benevolent good. But this was not Christ's self-denial. He never had any selfish good to give up. He had a personal good, but not a selfish one. For he never felt any selfish motives towards himself. Again, others suppose, that self-denial consists in giving up sinful affections for holy affections. But this was not Christ's self-denial. For he never had any sinful affections towards any object or being in the universe. It was not possible, therefore, that his self-denial should

consist in any thing else than his loving God supremely, and regarding his glory and interest above his own.

Let us now consider how Jesus Christ expressed and manifested such a spirit of self-denial. This was his governing principle of action. And therefore he must have always expressed it in a plain and striking manner. But he expressed it, especially, in the following instances of his conduct.

1. In his consenting to the glorious scheme of man's redemption. He was concerned in forming that great and complicated and astonishing design. He knew every other possible method of God's displaying himself to the view of his intelligent creatures, and of promoting his glory and their good. He knew, that God might have made all his intelligent creatures perfectly holy, and have preserved them in that state forever, which would have precluded all occasion for his undertaking the office of a Mediator.— But he saw that this would not be the wisest and most benevolent method of God's treating the moral creation. He saw that there was a better way for God to lay open his heart and display his glory before angels and men. And he saw that this best way would render it necessary for him to take the most arduous, difficult and painful part in the accomplishment of the important scheme. And when he saw it, he cheerfully consented to the adoption of a scheme, that

would subject him to the greatest labors and sufferings. Hear his language on this subject before he came into the world. "The Lord God possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting from the beginning, or ever the earth was. Then I was by him, as one brought up with him; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; rejoicing in the habitable part of the earth; and my delights were with the sons of men." He covenanted with the Father, in the early days of eternity, to undertake the self-denying work of man's redemption, with a clear and full view of what he must do and suffer in order to accomplish it. Nor did he ever lose sight of his sufferings a single moment, until the very scene opened before him. "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say?—Father, save me from this hour?—but for this cause came I unto this hour.—Father, glorify thy name." It was selfdenying to view such a scene of self-denial. And this self-denial he felt and expressed in consenting to go through it. This was the first expression of Christ's self-denial.—And if we consider that he viewed things future as clearly as things present, it must appear to have been an astonishing act of self-denial, and virtually comprehended all the self-denial he ever felt and expressed. It was one eternal act and expression of his self denying spirit.

2. Christ exercised and display-

ed his self denying spirit by taking upon him human nature. He was co-equal with the Father in every divine perfection. And while he sustained the character of Mediator in heaven he enjoyed the adoration and praises of the heavenly hosts. When he came from heaven and entered into our world, the Father enjoined it upon the angels to pay him divine homage. "When he bringeth the first begotten into the world, he saith, and let all the angels of God worship him." It was, therefore, a superlative expression of self-denial in such a great and glorious and divine person to leave the world of glory, to descend to our sinful world and here unite his divinity with humanity. It would have been an act of self-denial in one of the lowest angels of light to take the fashion of a man and the form of a servant. But it was an infinitely greater act of self-denial for the Lord of glory, the creator of the world and the proprietor of the universe to become united with human nature in its lowest—most contemptible form. It was a great and desirable good, which Christ had a right to desire and regard, to appear in the form of God and all the majesty of his divine nature. But though he was infinitely rich in divine glory, yet he made himself of no reputation, by taking upon him the nature, the form and the condition of a poor and despised man. This marvelous act of self-denial he performed with a high degree of pleasure and satisfaction. Hence

he is represented to address his Father, respecting his incarnation, in terms the most submissive, self denying and joyful. "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened; burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. Then said I, lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me; I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart." This was a strong and striking expression of the most perfect self renunciation and consecration of his glory to the glory of God and the good of the universe.

3. Christ manifested his self-denial, after he became man, by his constant and cheerful obedience to the will of his Father. He publicly and repeatedly declared, that he always meant to be obedient to every intimation of the divine will. He said, "I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father, that sent me. I came from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.—My meat is to do the will of him that sent me and to finish his work." If we now look into his conduct, through the course of his life, we shall find these declarations fully verified by the most constant obedience to every divine precept. He was entirely submissive to his parents, while he was in a state of minority. He read the Bible in his youth and made it the rule of his faith and practice. He lived in a course of secret prayer. Being in the form

of a servant, he labored with his hands, agreeably to the fourth command. And agreeably to the same command, he remembered and sanctified the Sabbath day.—He annually attended the passover, and punctually observed all the Mosaic rites and ceremonies.—He submitted to be baptized by John, in Jordan, as the original rite of inauguration into the priest's office. He preached the gospel with great zeal and diligence.—He went about doing good, curing diseases of body and mind. He submitted to hunger and thirst, weariness, poverty and reproach. As a man, he was obedient to the laws of man; as a Jew he was obedient to the laws of the Jews; and as a Mediator, he was obedient to every mediatorial command. even that of laying down and taking up his life. Now all these acts of obedience were acts of self denial. He was Lord of the Sabbath; he was Lord of the world; yea, he was Lord of the universe; and he had a right to command the service and obedience of the whole intelligent creation. But, nevertheless, he bowed his head and heart to the command of God and man. In this conduct he verified what he declared, that he came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. We cannot find, nor even conceive of any other obedience, so self denying as the obedience of Christ. And this self-denial was uniform, constant and perfect; because he fulfilled all righteousness and obeyed eve-

ry injunction, which his Father laid upon him. This perfect obedience demonstrated, that he sought not his own will, but the will of him, that sent him. But,

4. There was another way, in which Christ more literally and emphatically expressed his self denying spirit; and that was by his sufferings. Though while he lived in retirement and obscurity, we have no account of his suffering any peculiar pain, sickness, or affliction, yet as soon as he appeared in public and visibly acted in his mediatorial office, he drew the hatred, opposition and virulence of the ungodly world against him. They, who were esteemed the most respectable and influential in church and state, united in their feelings and exertions to make him a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. They represented him to be a transgressor of the laws of God and man, an enemy to virtue and religion, a friend to publicans and sinners, in league with satan, the great enemy of all righteousness, and a disturber of the public peace as well as a traitor to his country. Thus the reproaches of them, that reproached God, fell on him without reserve and without restraint.—But they did not stop here. They often attempted to stone him with stones, and once, to push him headlong down a precipice, with a malignant design to dash him to pieces. These dangers, however, he meant to escape, and by his miraculous power did escape, until his

time came to go to Jerusalem and meet those sufferings and that death, which were necessary to make expiation for the sins of the world. He knew the time when and the place where he was to pour out his soul on the cross.—Accordingly he prepared himself to meet his mortal enemies and to resign himself into their cruel hands. They bind him; they beat him; they spit in his face; they try him; they condemn him; they lead him as a malefactor to the place of execution; and there, with real malefactors, nail him to the cross and make his death as painful and excruciating as possible. Thus Christ was cut off, but not for himself. Thus he was destroyed and rejected of men.—Thus he was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities and the chastisement of our peace was upon him.—Thus he bore our sins in his body on a tree. It is probable that Christ suffered more from the treatment he received from the hands of his enemies than any other person could have suffered under the same treatment. If his body were not more susceptible of pain than that of other men; yet his mind was more capable of seeing and feeling the malignity and cruelty of those, who embrued their hands in his blood. This natural conjecture seems to be confirmed by his sweating as it were great drops of blood in consequence of his internal trouble and distress, on the prospect of his approaching

death. And now we are to consider, that his self-denial bore an exact proportion to his sensibility of pain, both in body and mind.—To make this evident to all the world and to the universe, his agonizing prayer was made and recorded and transmitted to all future ages. After he had entered into the garden, he said, “My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. And he went a little farther and fell on his face and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me : nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt. O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.” Thus Christ himself solemnly declares, that it was nothing but self-denial, which moved him to endure the tremendous sufferings of the cross.

Thus Christ denied himself of every thing, that it was in his power to deny himself. There was nothing which the glory of God and the good of the universe required him to give up, that he did not give up. He gave up more than any ; yea, than all created beings could have given up, had they been disposed to suffer and die as he did. Hence, through his life and in his death, he gave every kind and every degree of evidence, that he was possessed of perfect self-denial. He was willing to give up and did actually give up his good for the good of others. Though his own personal interests were great, yet he

preferred and sought greater interests. Though he had a proper regard to himself, yet he had a greater regard to the universe ; and this regard he expressed in eternity, in his life on earth and in his death on the cross and will continue to express forever.

The subject under our present consideration suggests the following remarks.

1. Since the Lord Jesus Christ exercised self-denial in undertaking and performing the work of a mediator, then God the Father and the Holy Spirit exercised self-denial in appointing him to that work. The Father and the Spirit saw what the work would be, and how much Christ must suffer, when they appointed him ; yet they did appoint him to all the humiliation, suffering, sorrow and reproach, which he endured in order to accomplish the work of redemption. But could they have made such an appointment, or have consented to it without self-denial ? They saw and felt all the evil he suffered. They esteemed and loved the good and the glory of which he deprived himself. And they esteemed and loved Christ as themselves.—They, therefore, as certainly exercised self-denial in his appointment to the work of Mediator as he did in undertaking and performing that work. They denied themselves a real great good for the sake of a real and greater good. This denial they exercised in the spirit of disinterested be-

nevolence and genuine self-denial.

2. Since Christ exercised and expressed self-denial in heaven, before he came into the world, we may conclude there always will be self-denial there. The sacred Trinity will always give up a real good in respect to the damned, for the sake of a greater good.— They will give up the everlasting holiness and happiness of fallen angels and lost men for the sake of the most perfect exercise and manifestation of the goodness and glory of God and the highest interests of the universe. They feel the value of their holiness and happiness far more than it can ever be felt by created beings. They feel the evil of their sinfulness and misery far more than it ever can be felt either by holy or unholy creatures. But they also see and feel the full extent of the greatest good of the universe. And for this good they are willing to deny themselves all the holiness and happiness of the non-elect angels and men, and to endure their eternal sinfulness, loathsomeness, misery and torment. As there has been self-denial in heaven from eternity in respect to the death of Christ, so there will be self-denial in heaven forever in respect to the angels and the human beings that perish. This self-denial will be felt and expressed with the keenest and tenderest sensibility by God, angels and saints.

3. If Christ's self-denial consists in giving up a real benevolent

good for a greater real benevolent good; then self-denial never consists in giving up one selfish good for another, or merely in giving up any selfish good for a benevolent one. This many have supposed to be true self-denial. And in support of their opinion they adduce Christ's command to pluck out a right eye, or to cut off a right hand, or right foot. But a right eye, a right hand, or a right foot is a real good and may be justly desired; and may be as really and as greatly desired in the spirit of benevolence as in the spirit of selfishness. Christ does not say a right eye *sin*, a right hand *sin*, or a right foot *sin*; as many unwisely say. But to sever a right eye, or hand, or foot from the body, is to give up a real and desirable good in the spirit of benevolence and self-denial, which consists in giving up any real personal good, that may be justly desired, for the sake of God and his kingdom and people. If self-denial consists in giving up a selfish good for a benevolent one, then no benevolent being can ever exercise self-denial. For benevolent beings have no selfish good to renounce. But the truth is, that none but benevolent beings ever do exercise real self-denial.

4. If it was right in Christ to give up a less good for a greater, then it must always be wrong to be unwilling to do it. It would have been wrong in Christ, if he had been unwilling to give up his personal interest for the general good,

or any other less good for a greater. And it is always wrong in mankind to be unwilling to give up a less good for a greater. It does not alter the case what good is to be given up, whether our own or the good of others; whether natural or spiritual good; whether temporal or eternal good.—Every less good, however great and of whatever nature, is always to be given up for a greater good. And they, who refuse to do so, act selfishly and wickedly.

5. If Christ's selfdenial consisted in his giving up a less good for a greater, then selfdenial is inseparably connected with happiness and naturally connected with the greatest happiness. Christ's selfdenial was inseparably connected with happiness, though his happiness was once interrupted; and it was finally connected with the greatest happiness. This must always be the case. For they, who have the spirit of self-denial, always esteem and enjoy the greater good for which they give up a less good. And the greater good is the highest good of the universe. As every thing under the divine government is made subservient to the highest good of the universe, they who have the spirit of disinterested benevolence and self-denial, possess and enjoy all things. They rejoice always and they rejoice in all things. Their joy is full. In proportion to their capacity and benevolence they are as happy as God, who is most blessed forever. It is giving up a less

good for a greater, that makes God, and Christ, and the Holy Spirit, and angels, and saints most joyful and happy. They are perfectly satisfied with the greater good for which they sacrifice the less good.

6. If Christ has the spirit of self-denial, then when sinners become christians, they have the same spirit. The apostle says—"If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his." And again, "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things are passed away; and, behold, all things are become new." Let a person only change his heart from selfishness to self-denial, and he changes the universe. God and his decrees, and his conduct, and law; Jesus Christ, and all the doctrines, and duties, and blessings of gospel; are new, and good, and lovely, and glorious to a person, who truly turns from himself.—This must be a great change.—For a person, who so changes himself, changes all things in respect to himself—he changes in respect to himself every being, object and event in the universe.

7. Real christians will manifest the spirit of selfdenial. They feel it and they cannot conceal it without the greatest and most shameful hypocrisy.

8. Nothing but their total selfishness, which is perfect sinfulness, ever prevents sinners from loving Christ and embracing the gospel and possessing and enjoying all things.

9. Every person is bound to be a christian on Christ's own terms. No one can be a christian on any other, or lower or easier, or better terms. He says, "Whosoever he be of you, that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." LUKE.

THE APOSTLE'S CONDEMNATION OF
FALSE TEACHERS.

No. 1.

INTRODUCTION.

"As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you, than that ye have received, let him be accursed."

Whether Paul planted the churches in Galatia or not, it is certain, that he preached the gospel among them, and for a time was greatly esteemed. But after he left them, there came along certain Judaizing teachers, who preached contrary to Paul, and led many into great and fundamental errors. Such conduct both in the deceivers and deceived, was very alarming to the apostle, who wrote this epistle, on purpose to convince them of their guilt and danger. He seems to be astonished, that those, who had been taught the pure doctrines of the gospel, should so suddenly renounce the most important truths and imbibed the most destructive errors. He begins his address in this spirited manner; "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him, that called you into the

grace of Christ, unto another gospel; which is not another; but there be some, that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you, than that ye have received, let him be accursed."— Though the apostle implicitly blames the Galatians for embracing false doctrines, yet he more expressly and severely reprobates their false teachers. But many may be ready to ask, how Paul could with propriety censure either ministers for preaching, or hearers for receiving erroneous sentiments; for no man had been a greater stickler for error and a greater opposer of truth than he had been. Of all men, in the world, therefore, he ought to have been the most catholic towards those, who had lost the path of truth and were groping in the path of error and delusion. This difficulty, I presume, many have felt; and perhaps it has never been entirely removed from their minds. I propose, therefore, to meet this difficulty; and, if possible, to justify the apostle in his condemnation of false teachers. This subject is no less important than difficult. And its importance will, I hope, justify the attempt to place it in a clear light.

No. II.

Paul preached the true Gospel.

That Paul preached the true gospel he abundantly asserted under divine inspiration; because his enemies frequently questioned not only the truth of his doctrines, but also the truth of his divine mission. He was born out of due time. He was the last of all the apostles.—For a long while after the twelve were sent forth to preach the gospel, he remained an open and violent enemy to it. Hence after his conversion and divine call to preach the gospel, many were ready to scruple his sincerity.—This gave him occasion often to assert his apostolic authority and solemnly declare that he preached the pure gospel of Christ.—Knowing that the false teachers in Galatia had called the truth of his mission and of his doctrines in question, he positively asserts the truth of both, in the beginning of his epistle to the Galatians. His first words are, “Paul, an apostle, not of men, neither by man, but but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead.” And in the eleventh and twelfth verses of the first chapter, he affirms, that he preached the true gospel of Christ. “But I certify you brethren, that the gospel, which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.” This gospel, which Paul

received immediately from Christ, he most fully and faithfully preached. In his farewell address to the elders of Ephesus he said, “I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men, for I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.” He told the Corinthians that he had not handled the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commended himself to every man’s conscience in the sight of God. Thus it appears that Paul understood and preached the gospel. And by the gospel we are to understand, that scheme of religious sentiments, which is comprised in the purpose of redemption by the divine Redeemer. God from eternity determined to save a certain number of mankind. And in order to effect this object, he determined that mankind should become sinners and need a Savior; that Christ, the second person in the Trinity, should become incarnate, suffer and die to make an atonement for sin; that the Holy Spirit should convince and convert all those, who were ordained to eternal life, and finally conduct them to heaven; and that all things should be so ordered throughout the universe, as eventually to accomplish the great work of redemption.—This is the sum and substance of the gospel, which Christ revealed to Paul, and which he plainly and faithfully preached.

No. III.

The false teachers, whom the apostle condemned, preached another gospel.

If Paul perfectly understood the true gospel, then he perfectly knew whether the false teachers preached the same gospel, which Christ revealed to him, or another scheme of sentiments, which was subversive of the gospel of Christ. And he expressly declares, that they did preach another gospel, or another scheme of sentiments, which was totally inconsistent with the true gospel, that he had preached, and that the Galatians had once believed. "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him, that called you into the grace of Christ, *unto another gospel.*" By him, that called them into the grace of Christ, he meant himself, who had been the instrument of their conversion. And he marvels, that they had so soon renounced the gospel, which he had preached to them, to embrace another gospel, or a scheme of religious sentiments directly contrary to that which he had taught them. But he proceeds to say, that the scheme of sentiments, which they had embraced, was not properly another gospel. "Which is not another ; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ." This was as much as to say, The gospel, which your false teachers have preached is not worthy of the name of the gospel, but is a scheme of sentiments totally sub-

versive of the true gospel, which I have preached unto you. And though they pretend to preach the gospel, yet they actually mean to pervert the real gospel of Christ. And for this, I condemn them.—Did they only err in respect to some particular non-essential points, I should not censure them so fully and severely ; but since they preach an entirely different and false scheme of religion, I solemnly condemn both them and their doctrines. Hear what I say, "Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you, than that we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you, than that ye have received, let him be accursed." I repeat what I say, that I may be fully understood.—I mean to declare, by divine authority, that if I, or any other inspired apostle, should preach any other gospel, or scheme of sentiments, than that I have preached unto you, and you believed, let him be accursed. And I further affirm, by the same authority, that if any other man, who has not been inspired, should preach any other gospel, than the true gospel of Christ, let him also be accursed. I do not pronounce a curse upon every man, who shall embrace and inculcate any religious error ; but I do pronounce a curse upon every man, who shall embrace and preach another gospel, or a scheme of religious sentiments,

that is subversive of the gospel of Christ. And to my certain knowledge, the false teachers, who have removed you from the grace of Christ, in which you have been taught, preach another gospel and would pervert the gospel of Christ. And upon this ground, I solemnly say, *let them be accursed*.—It is proposed in the further consideration of this subject in future numbers to show, that the apostle had good reasons to censure and condemn false teachers. APOLLOS.

For the Christian Magazine.

The following statement of his views and feelings, was made to me in his own writing, by the late Dr. S. Winslow, of Foxborough, Mass. It is submitted to the publishing committee of the Christian Magazine for insertion in some number of that work, if it be thought best. T. W.

RELIGIOUS DISTRESS AND RELIEF.

At the age of about eight years, I was, for a considerable time, much concerned about my future state. I saw, as I thought, that I was in the hands of God, and that from the unbounded extent of his view and determination he must have formed determinations for or against me, from which it would be inconsistent with the nature of God to expect any alteration.—And although the Bible commanded something to be done by me, yet as I felt opposed, I did not think I should do it acceptably without God's assistance, which he

never would afford to bring about an event contrary to his previous determination respecting me.—And though I expected to be judged according to my works, yet I believed my works would be so ordered out in the course of Providence as exactly to fit me for that state, to which the divine mind had assigned me. This, from a sense of my heart opposition to God and of course that he was not my friend, filled me with dismay and astonishment, feeling the most pungent regret that ever I had been brought into being. These apprehensions had their revivals and declines upon my mind until I was about eighteen years of age, when I appeared to myself so odious in the sight of God, that he could not do any other with me, as I thought, than make me eternally miserable. I sought his favour with a mixture of enmity and dismay. This frame of mind lasted several months and then subsided. At the age of about twenty-four, without any particular providence or other means to excite my solicitude, my mind by degrees was stirred up with anxious fears about my spiritual interest, which lasted several months, in which time God was pleased to set my sins in order before me, not in a general and complex, but in a single and separate view. In this time I heard of some, who received divine consolation and were brought into the liberty of the gospel, which stirred up my enmity against them and against God.

because I was left; for which I feared his displeasure. At length it seemed to me, that my concern grew less, which alarmed my fears, lest I should become wholly indifferent about the welfare of my soul. This was my great concern for several days, when reading the 13th of Luke at the 24th which is—"Strive to enter in at the straight gate, for many I say unto you will seek to enter in and shall not be able;" and considering that the word *strive* was not so emphatical as it ought to be rendered from the original, which should be *agonize*, I thought I had not perhaps employed every possible means to obtain the favor of God; I therefore resolved to be more importunate at the throne of grace at a proper opportunity. There was at this time a pious person present; with whom I had been conversing.—I again opened the Bible and began to read at the latter part of the 27th Psalm, particularly the last verse, which

is "wait on the Lord; be of good courage; and he shall strengthen thine heart; wait, I say, on the Lord;" with a number of verses in the beginning of the following Psalm, which gave me inexpressible joy and satisfaction, because I viewed it as the word of God, which I then knew I never had done before. And I admired and loved the divine character, as I then beheld it, unconnected with what he might have done for me; for my interest was at the time wholly out of the question. God was the object and myself as a disinterested spectator, beholding and admiring the divine beauty, which seemed to animate and beautify every object around me; the savor of which seemed in some measure to last for a few hours and was gone.—Since which time I have been almost wholly in the dark; without satisfaction in worldly objects, or the company of the godly.

RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 160.)

PALESTINE MISSION.

First came 10 or 12 armed with swords and matchlocks. Their dress was merely a turban on the head and a piece of cloth tied round the waist. They met our guide and camel drivers, took each other's hands, kissed, and had all the appearance of friends. It was, however, soon found that they wanted money. Our guide told them they must exact nothing from us, because we were Englishmen; for we travel with English

passports, and though we tell our attendants that we are Americans, yet they know no difference between us and Englishmen, having never before seen Americans, or heard of America. The name of Englishmen is so much respected even among Bedouins, that we were not molested. For two hours, however, as we moved along, our attendants were engaged in loud and violent disputes with these and other companies

of Bedouins, who came up after they went away. They extorted a few dollars from the Armenians and Greeks, and at last took an ass from one of the Arabs. Our shekh knew all these freebooters, and it is probably owing to his acquaintance with them, and his faithfulness to us, that they were so easily satisfied, and that we met with so little trouble from them. He says most of the Bedouins are much worse than these, and yet he called these Satans (Shaitan.)

Under a large Sycomore tree we saw women and children threshing barley on the ground with long sticks. Near by was a shepherdess tending a large flock with her crook in her hand, and the skin of a lamb, having the wool on, thrown over her shoulders for a shawl.

Respecting the Southern boundary of Canaan.

It is difficult to ascertain the limit, which divided the ancient Canaan from Egypt. God said to Abraham, Gen. 15: 18, "Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates." In Josh. 15: 4, it is said, that the border of Judah "went out unto the river of Egypt." The question is, what was meant by the *river of Egypt*.—D'Anville places it, on his map of ancient Egypt, within about 10 miles of Katich (Casium) and more than 30 from El Arish (Rhinocalura.) We crossed no river, nor any stream of water, however small, between Carro and Gaza, but we passed the beds of several now dry, one in the valley of Zaaka, another called Silgah four hours, and a third two hours, before reaching Gaza. This last is probably the brook Besor, which David passed over with 400 men in pursuit of the Amalekites, who had smitten Ziklag, and whom he found "spread abroad upon all the earth, eating, and drinking, and dancing," where he "smote them." 1 Sam. 30: 16, 17.

Country of the Philistines.

At half past 5, after riding 11 hours and a half, we arrived at Gaza; took two small dirty apartments in a large filthy khan, and put up for the Sabbath thankful that we were not among deserts of sand, or bands of Arab freebooters, so as to be obliged to travel on the Lord's day. Gaza is the city whose

gates Sampson carried away, and where he slew 3000 Philistines at his death.—We had no very good opportunity to judge of the population of the place, but probably the estimation, given by geographers, of 5000, is not far from the truth. Mussulmans never take a census, unless it be an enumeration of the houses in order to tax them. The city stands on a little elevation. The houses are built of stone, but make a very mean appearance. The scenery around is beautiful.

At Gaza they found a number of Greeks, and a Greek priest, to whom they gave 13 copies of the Scriptures, and sold 25. But one present knew the Greek language, and to him they gave a Testament. The priest said that the church had been built twelve centuries. They left Gaza on the forenoon of Monday, April 21st.

We crossed a bridge over the bed of a small river, now dry; and then passed through groves of olives, and fields of grass, wheat, barley, and tobacco. The plains were agreeably diversified by gentle elevations and small valleys. Five hours and a half from Gaza, we saw on our left the village Mijdal, near the ruins of the ancient Askelon, which is now uninhabited. Such at least is the information given us by the Arabs. After riding eight hours and a half, we pitched our tent near the village Esdood, which, from its situation, and from the similarity of the name, we presume to be ancient Ashod. It consists of 100 or 150 of what the people call houses, miserable cabins and holes, built of stone, covered with branches of trees, and roots, and these again with earth so that vegetation appears every where on the tops of them. The place is inhabited wholly by Mussulmans.

Tuesday, 22. In three hours and a half after leaving Esdood, we passed Yibua, a village something smaller than Esdood. In riding through this ancient country of the Philistines, we have seen at a distance to the east, a range of high mountains. On the west, a range of small sand hills ran along between us and the sea. The country around us was green and beautiful, and the soil of a good color, which might, no doubt, be made very productive by proper cultivation. At present, howev-

er, the grass, and crops of wheat and barley are of but a small growth. We saw few villages, and those few are small. There are no scattered houses. The population appears not to be great.

Jaffa.

In ten hours and a half ride after leaving Esdood, they arrived at Jaffa; and, word being sent to Mr. Damiani, the English consul, his Dragoman came to procure them admittance into the city. They took lodgings in the consul's house, which stands by the sea-side, and as is supposed, at, or very near the place, where Simon the tanner lived, and the Apostle Peter was lodged. At evening the table was served by a man of Greek origin, who was 100 years old, and had been 80 years a servant in the family of Mr. Damiani and his father.

On the 24th they left Jaffa on mules and asses, and after a ride of four hours, arrived at Rama, or Ramla, the Arimathea of the Scriptures, where they took lodgings for the night in an Armenian convent.

Approach of Jerusalem.

Friday, 25. At half past 5 we set out for Jerusalem, comforted with the hope, that this was the last day of our journey. In about two hours, we saw a Bedouin horseman sitting on the ground a little before us, with his horse feeding by his side. As we advanced he rose, and boldly put himself in front of us all. The Christians, who were with us, and who rode forward, stopped and turned from him, as if he had been a lion.—As soon as Mr. Damiani told him who we were, he let us pass quietly, but tried hard to get something from the rest of the company. He got nothing, however, except a trifle, which the mule drivers gave him, in order to be on good terms with him hereafter. At 8, we crossed a hill, and then entered a valley, which we were half an hour in passing. Soon after this, we came among the mountains. Here we saw, at a distance, a camp of Bedouins.—As soon as they saw us, one of their horse-men rode on swiftly, as if to interrupt our path. He came into the

road before us, halted, and looked at us again, and then rode off. Had we been Rayahs (i. e. Christian subjects of the Grand Signor,) he would not probably have left us without money. For some time our road lay alongside the bed of a brook, in a deep ravine, with mountains of rocks rising up like Pyramids on each side of us. By degrees the ascent became more steep, till we reached the height of these ragged mountains, where we had a good view of the plains between us and Jaffa. It was often with difficulty that our beasts could walk, on account of the badness of the road, and the steepness of the mountains. These mountains are covered with small shrubs, suitable for goats, of which we saw several large flocks. There are no forests, but in the vallies and on the sides of the hills are many olive and fig trees. At a place called Sareen, two or three fierce, armed Bedouins appeared, and began to demand tribute. We rode on very carelessly, bid them good morning, and enquired after their health.—They began to talk loudly, and ordered us to stop, but we rode on, and they did not attempt to stop us by force.—When the native Christians and Jews pass such places, they have no way to get along, but to satisfy the rapacity of these plunderers.

A little past noon they came to a village, which Chateaubriand calls the village of Jeremiah. A little way from it, was a pure stream of water, flowing out of a rock, where they stopped to quench their thirst, and eat some bread and fruit.

Thence we pursued our journey over a road impassable for camels, and very difficult for mules and asses. After crossing a high mountain, we passed through a deep valley, where is a small village called Kaloona. The mountains here are of a peculiar formation. They seem almost as if they were built by the hand of man, and rise gradually, step by step, like Pyramids. Each step, however, is so fastened into the 'Everlasting Hills,' as to show you that it was placed there by the hand of Him, who "existed before the mountains were brought forth." On these steps, which are sometimes three or four rods wide, and sometimes only a few feet, you see soil, which produces shrubs.

and, when cultivated, vines, figs, and olives. The country continued the same till we were within half an hour of Jerusalem, when all at once Mount Olivet and the Holy City opened to our view. Thus it is often with the last hours of the Christian. He is obliged to pass over a rough and wearisome way, where he is continually exposed to the attacks of enemies, till near the close of life—till his feet are about to stand within the gates of the New Jerusalem, and then he is favored with some bright visions of the place he is soon to enter.

Reflections on Mr. Parsons.

As we drew near the city, we remembered how our dear brother Parsons, when wars and rumors of wars obliged him to leave the place, turned back his eyes, as he ascended the hill west of Jerusalem, and wept and said, "If I shall find favor in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and show me both it, and his habitation"—Alas for us! these words were fulfilled in a much higher sense, than he then anticipated. We cannot for a moment doubt, that he did find favor in the eyes of the Lord; and though he was not permitted to return to the earthly Jerusalem, yet his divine Savior has given him an infinitely higher felicity, even that of seeing and enjoying the bliss of that Eternal city, in which the divine glory dwells.

They enter the Holy City.

With feelings not easily described, about four o'clock, we entered JERUSALEM. The scenes and events of 4,000 years seem to rush upon our minds; events in which Heaven, and Earth, and Hell, had felt the deepest interest. This was the place, selected by the Almighty for his dwelling, and here his glory was rendered visible.—This was the "perfection of beauty," and the "glory of all lands." Here David sat and tuned his harp, and sung the praises of Jehovah. Hither the tribes came up to worship. Here enraptured prophets saw bright visions of the world above, and received messages from on high for guilty man. Here our Lord and Savior came in the form of a servant, and groaned, and wept, and poured out his soul unto death, to redeem us from sin, and save us from the

pains of hell. Here, too, the wrath of an incensed God has been poured out upon his chosen people, and has laid waste his heritage.

Messrs. Fisk and King took lodgings in a Greek convent, called the Convent of St. Michael the Archangel, situated but a little distance from the place where it is supposed the Lord Jesus was crucified. There windows looked out upon the Mount of Olives, from whence he ascended to glory, and where he commanded his disciples to "go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Mr. Wolff took lodgings with his brethren the Jews.

The first part of their Journal concludes with the following request to their brethren and patrons in this favored land, which will draw forth many prayers in their behalf to Him who heareth prayer, and whose eye, doubtless, hath never been regardless of the interesting land in which they now dwell.

Christian Brethren in America;— Pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified, even as it is with you, and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith.

DESCRIPTION OF JERUSALEM,

By Messrs. Fisk and King.

JERUSALEM appears, in a general view, to be situated on the side of a mountain, descending toward the east, where it is divided from Mount Olivet by the valley of Cedron. The summit of the mountain is considerably higher than the city, so that in coming from Jaffa you arrive near Jerusalem before you see it.

On a nearer view of the city, you perceive that it is built on several hills; viz: Zion at the south-west part, Calvary at the north-west, Moriah at the south-east, and Bezetha at the north-east. According to the ancient descrip-

tions of the city, it included another hill called Acra. This hill it is not now easy to distinguish; at least, we see nothing which corresponds entirely to the description of it given by Josephus. There is a hill between Zion and Moriah, which corresponds well to the east part of Acra. Josephus says the valley of the Cheesemongers, which divided Acra from Zion, went out to Siloam. This applies precisely to the hill in question; but Josephus adds that Acra was in the form of a crescent. This does not apply to the hill of which we speak. Possibly, however, this hill may have been anciently connected with what is now the west part of Zion, and separated by a small valley from the city of David. Before Titus besieged Jerusalem, it had been captured five times, and once demolished entirely by the Babylonians. Titus spared the west wall and three towers, "but for all the rest of the wall, it was so thoroughly laid even with the ground, by those that dug it up to the foundation, that there was left nothing to make those that came thither believe that it had ever been inhabited." And since the time of Titus, Jerusalem has been often plundered, and at least partially destroyed. In the space of so many ages, it is to be expected, that some vallies should be filled up, and some hills levelled. It is, also, extremely difficult to trace little ascents and descents in an area covered with buildings of various heights. Whether the west part of what seems now to be Zion, was formerly a part of Acra, or not, it is difficult to decide. The Jews at present call the whole hill Zion.—We shall, therefore, speak of it as such, and give the name Acra to the hill, which lies between Zion and Moriah.

The south wall passes over mount Zion, near its summit, so that a great part of the hill is without the city. South of the hill is the deep valley of the son of Hinnom; the same valley, turning north bounds Zion likewise on the west. The vallies, which separates it in the city from Calvary on the north, and Acra on the north-east, are not deep. Moriah has on the east the deep valley of Cedron. On the south of it, without the city, is a little elevation which is marked on D'Anville's map as Ophel; thence the descent is steep, till you come to the fountain of Siloam.—The vallies north and west of Moriah at present are not very deep. Calvary was perhaps only a small elevation on

a greater hill, which is now the north west part of the city; but the name is now given to the whole hill. Bezetha is separated from Calvary by a wide valley; and east of Calvary is the dividing valley between Moriah and Bezetha, in which is the pool of Bethesda.

We have viewed Jerusalem from different stations, have walked around it and within it, and have stood on the Mount of Olives with Josephus' description of it in our hands, trying to discover the hills and vallies as laid down by him near 1800 years ago; and after all our research we compare Jerusalem to a beautiful person, whom we have not seen for many years, and who has passed through a great variety of changes and misfortune, which have caused the rose on her cheeks to fade, her flesh to consume away, and her skin to become dry and withered, and have covered her face with the wrinkles of age; but who still retains some general features, by which we recognize her as the person, who used to be the delight of the circle in which she moved. Such is the present appearance of this Holy City which was once the "perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth."

Missionary Herald.

(To be continued.)

ORDINATIONS.

On the 28th of April, the Rev. Alexander Phenix was ordained over the second church in Springfield, Mass.—of Sermon by the Rev. Dr. Romeyn, of New-York.

The Rev. Jacob Cummings was recently ordained over the Congregational Church in Stratham, N. H. Sermon by the Rev. Mr. Dimmick, of Newburyport, Mass.

The Rev. Dr. Mason, President of Dickinson college, has tendered his resignation to the Board of Trustees, on account of ill-health.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Philotapeinos, Theophilus and W. are received.

ERROR.

In some of the copies, page 177—2d line from the top, insert—"his interest and his Father's will."

THE
CHRISTIAN MAGAZINE.

VOL. I.

JULY, 1824.

No. 7.

SERMONS, No. V.

THE BIBLE EASILY UNDERSTOOD.

PROVERBS, VIII. 8, 9.

All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing froward or perverse in them. They are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge.

The person speaking in this chapter is called wisdom; by which may be meant the wisdom of God personified, or God himself denominated by one of his essential perfections; as we often say, the Eternal, or the Almighty, when we mean God himself. We may therefore consider God himself as saying in the text, "All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing froward or perverse in them.—They are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge." By him that understandeth and them that find knowledge, Solomon means good men, or those who have a wise and understanding heart, in distinction from sinners, who are

under the dominion of a depraved, perverse, selfish heart. This is evident from a parallel passage in the 14th chapter; "A scorner seeketh knowledge, and findeth it not: but knowledge is easy to him that understandeth." By those who understand, or find knowledge, he means those who have a spiritual discernment of spiritual things, arising from the benevolence, or goodness of their hearts. Such good men, God says in the text, can easily find the knowledge of the plain and important truths which he has revealed in his word. They find nothing froward, or unrighteous, or unreasonable, in any of his declarations, or precepts, or prohibitions, or promises, or threatenings, though scorners view them as froward and false, and inconsistent, and absurd.

This truth, therefore, lies upon the very face of the text,

That good men find it easy to understand the word of God. I shall,

I. Show that the word of God is easy to be understood; and,

II. Show that good men find it to be so.

I. The first thing to be shown is, that the word of God is easy to be understood. This is a point, that needs to be proved, because it is so generally disbelieved and denied. Many suppose, that it is not necessary, nor even possible for any of mankind to understand it, and know that they understand it. But there are some good reasons to believe, that the Bible is really easy to be understood.—
For,

1. God designed to *reveal* his will in his word. The Bible contains a revelation of his will to men of all ages, characters, conditions, and capacities, whether old or young, whether rich or poor, whether learned or unlearned, and whether possessed of larger or smaller capacities. God viewed all classes of men as standing in equal need of a revelation of his will, and meant to make it plain and intelligible to all. It is a solecism in language, and an absurdity in nature, that God should make a revelation of his will which should not reveal it, but conceal it. It was not necessary, nor proper, that he should make known all his will in his word; but it was necessary and proper, that what he proposed to reveal, should be revealed in a plain and intelligible manner. And there can be no question whether he was able to give a revelation of his will, that should be plain to every capacity. For he who forms the minds of men,

perfectly knows all that variety which he makes in their intellectual powers. He knows, that they are all rational and immortal creatures, and possess all the mental faculties which render them moral agents, and proper subjects of moral government. He is able, therefore, to give them such commands, as they are capable of understanding and obeying, and which shall lay them under moral and indispensable obligations to obey. And this he has actually done in his word. All the essential precepts and prohibitions, promises and threatenings in the Bible are level to the lowest understanding. The way to heaven, which God has revealed, is a way of holiness, and so plain, that way-faring-men, though fools, have no need to err in it. “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” As God meant to reveal his mind and will to mankind in his word, so it contains as plain a revelation as his infinite wisdom and goodness could make.

2. God has revealed in his word, his supreme and ultimate end in all his works of creation, providence and redemption; which is to give the most perfect display of all his perfections, in promoting his own glory, and the greatest holiness and happiness of the intelligent creation. This is the

greatest and best end that he could possibly propose in all his works, and the most easy to be understood by all his rational creatures. When he tells them that, "Of him, and through him, and to him, are all things ; and that for his pleasure, they are, and were created," a very child may understand his meaning. A very child knows what is done for itself, and not for another ; and what God means by saying, " that he has made all things *for himself*." This great and good design in all its branches and means of accomplishing it, comprizes a complete, consistent, and connected system of divine truths, which renders the Scriptures of more easy understanding and interpretation, than any human compositions, which are always more or less unconnected and inconsistent. We always find, that the more clearly any author expresses his design, and the more consistently and connectedly he writes, the more easy it is to understand his meaning in the various parts and passages of his book. The connection and consistency, therefore, which run through the Bible, render it more easy to understand, than any other book of the same magnitude and antiquity. Though some parts of the Bible are historical, some prophetic, and some doctrinal ; yet they are all connected and consistent with each other, and with God's ultimate and supreme end in all his works of creation, providence, and redemption. If God did intend before the foundation of the world, to make the fullest and brightest display of all his perfections in all his works ; the whole history of his conduct towards his creatures, and of their conduct towards him, is perfectly connected and consistent with his original and eternal design, and just such a history as we might justly expect to find in his word. The account he has given us of his creating the heavens and the earth, angels and men ; of his conduct towards the angels that stood and fell, of his conduct towards man in his primitive and lapsed state ; and of his conduct towards his degenerate and sinful posterity, from age to age, appears to be perfectly consistent with his original purpose ; and therefore easy to be understood and believed. The prophetic parts of the Bible are connected and consistent with each other, and with the historical parts of it, as well as with the great and good design, which runs through the whole sacred volume. All the predictions in the Bible, concerning future events, from the beginning of the world to the millenium and general judgment, are in perfect harmony and connection with the first great and gracious prediction, that "*the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head.*" And this is a key, which all expositors may use in explaining prophecies of things past or to come. Though they may find it difficult to discover the true meaning of prophecies, which re-

main to be fulfilled; yet they may certainly know, that they respect events, which will some way or other, promote the work of man's redemption, and will be sooner or later, easily understood. The same harmony and connection run through all the principal and fundamental doctrines of divine revelation. They are all inseparably linked together in that eternal purpose, which God purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. And the links in this golden chain of doctrines we find clearly and distinctly mentioned in the eighth of Romans. "We know, that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his *purpose*. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified, and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Here we find the doctrine of election flowing from the doctrine of divine decrees; the doctrine of regeneration or effectual calling flowing from the purpose of God in sending Christ into the world to save sinners; the doctrine of justification flowing from the doctrine of regeneration, and the doctrine of the final salvation of believers, flowing from their justification through the atonement of Christ. Now it has been universally acknowledged by all orthodox christians from the apostles' days to the present time, that the doctrine of decrees, the doctrine of election, the doctrine of atonement, the doctrine of the regeneration of sinners, the doctrine of their justification by faith in Christ, and the doctrine of their final perseverance in holiness to eternal life, are the cardinal, fundamental and essential doctrines of the Bible. And if these doctrines are perfectly connected and consistent with each other, and all minor doctrines are connected and consistent with these; then all the doctrines of the Bible are connected and consistent, not only with themselves, but with all the historical and prophetic parts of Scripture, and with God's supreme and ultimate end in the creation of the world. Further, the harmony and consistency of the Bible extend to the preceptive and prohibitory part of it. It contains a vast variety of commands, promises, and threatenings; and these are entirely consistent and connected, and commend themselves to every man's reason and conscience in the world. The first and great commandment requires us to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our mind, and with all our strength. The second, which is like unto it, requires us to love our neighbor as ourselves. And on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets;—That is, all the commands in the Bible, are of the same na-

ture, are clothed with the same divine authority, and are equally holy, just and good. It is easy to see the reasonableness of these commands, either in the relation we bear to God and he bears to us, or in the circumstances in which he has placed us in this world.— And his promises to our obedience and his threatenings to our disobedience, are as good and as just, as the commands to which they are annexed, and as easy to understand.

3. The truths, which God has revealed in his word are not only plain and important; but expressed in a plain and intelligible manner. The style of Scripture is that middle style, which is below the language of the learned, and above the language of the vulgar, and which is commonly used by the great majority of mankind.— And though it is very often highly figurative; yet the figures are plain and obvious, being generally taken from the most common and well known objects in nature. The inspired penmen “speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth.” The language of inspiration is the plainest and best, that infinite wisdom could suggest. Not only the language, but the method in which God has revealed his will in his word, is extremely plain and easy to understand. It requires no philosophical, or metaphysical reasoning to discover the facts, the characters, the doctrines, and the du-

ties taught in the Bible. Accordingly, it has always been a fact, that men of common abilities and mental improvements, have understood the Bible, better than the wise and learned men of the world. Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, have best understood the Bible; but way-faring men, though fools, have better understood it; which proves, that it is a book containing plain truths, and expressed in a plain and intelligible manner. God may therefore, with propriety say in the text, “All the words of my mouth, are in righteousness, there is nothing froward or perverse in them. They are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge.” But still,

II. It seems proper to inquire, why good men in particular find the Bible so plain and easy to be understood. Here I would observe, in general, that this is owing to their having good *hearts*, rather than to their possessing superior intellectual powers, or a larger stock of acquired knowledge.— God has given a good heart to good men, or that wise and understanding heart for which Solomon prayed and which he obtained.— And to this cause their superior knowledge of the will of God is ascribed in the text. He says, “All his words are plain and right to him that understandeth, and to them that find knowledge.” While in another place he says, “A scorner seeketh wisdom and find-

eth it not : but knowledge is easy to him that understandeth." Daniel speaking of his own predictions says, "Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly : and none of the wicked shall understand ; but the *wise* shall understand." God says by the prophet Hosea, "Who is *wise*, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know them? for the ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them : but the transgressors shall fall therein." But to be a little more particular, there are various reasons, why those, who have a *good heart*, find it easy to understand the will of God revealed in his word.

For, in the first place, they desire to know the revealed will of God. They sincerely and devoutly pray for this knowledge. David prayed, and said to God, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." And five times more in the same psalm, he prays, that "God would *teach him his statutes.*" This is the language of every good man's heart. He sincerely and ardently desires to know all that God has revealed of *himself* in his word. He loves God, and of course he loves to know every thing that God has revealed concerning his character, his conduct, and his designs. He is not afraid of finding any thing froward, or false; or unjust, or disagreeable to his heart; but ex-

pects to find that which will enlighten his understanding, and rejoice his heart. And with such desires and expectations, he finds it is easy and pleasant to search the Scriptures, and find that knowledge of God, that David found, which was sweeter than honey, or the honey comb.

In the second place, good men have a heart after God's own heart, which gives them a spiritual discerning of spiritual things. Those who are benevolent know what benevolence is by their own experience of it; and therefore can more easily understand whatever is expressive of it. The whole word of God breathes the spirit of benevolence, and is an expression of it. The designs God has revealed, the laws he has given, the promises he has made, the threatenings he has denounced, and all the truths he has taught in his word, are real expressions of benevolence. It is easy, therefore, for those who possess a benevolent spirit, to understand all those expressions of benevolence. Hence says the Apostle, "What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so, the things of God knoweth no man but the spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit *which is of God*; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God: for they are fool-

ishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." If the will of a pious parent be put into the hand of a pious child, he can easily understand every item of it, because he will not think of construing any particular article in a sense contrary to the spirit of paternal benevolence. Just so, the children of God, who possess his benevolent spirit, can easily find the true meaning of all that is contained in his word, whether it be a doctrine, a command, a prohibition, a promise, or a threatening. They will not presume to construe a chapter, or verse, or word, contrary to the spirit of true benevolence. They will not err in their hearts in misunderstanding the words of God's mouth, which are expressions of his heart. A holy heart makes it easy to understand the Holy Scriptures.— Besides,

Thirdly, good men can easily understand the will of God; because they sincerely desire to obey his will in all things. They desire to do what he requires, to avoid what he has forbidden, to escape what he has threatened, and to enjoy what he has promised. They delight in the law of God after the inward man. And Christ says, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." A dutiful child easily understands the will of his parent; and a faithful servant easily understands the will

of his master. So the children of God, who desire to know and to do his will very readily understand it, and cannot easily mistake it.— So that the whole word of God is plain to those who possess his spirit, and delight to do his will.

IMPROVEMENT.

1. If the doctrine of decrees lies at the foundation of all that God has revealed in his word; then none can clearly understand any part of the Bible, without understanding that doctrine. It seems to be a very common opinion, that it is of little or no importance, whether men believe or disbelieve the doctrine of decrees, if it be true. But if it be true, that God had an ultimate and supreme end in the creation of the world; then every thing revealed in the Bible, and indeed every thing in the whole circle of creation, stands inseparably connected with that supreme and ultimate design. If that design be wise; then all that God has revealed in his word, or done in his providence is wise. If that design be right; then all that God has revealed in his word, and done in his providence is right. If that design be good; then all that God has revealed in his word, and done in his providence is good, and truly desireable. But if that design be not wise, and right, and good, then there is nothing wise, or right, or good, in the word or works of God. But who will say, that it is a matter of little or no importance, to know the wisdom, rectitude, and goodness of God? The first thing,

in the order of nature, that God ever did, was the devising, digesting, and fixing a complete, consistent, and connected plan of all his works of creation, providence, and redemption. And this plan, or ultimate end in creation, he has revealed in his word; and therefore it is impossible for mankind to understand his word, without understanding his eternal purpose, which lies at the foundation of all that he has *revealed and done*.— Though it be not necessary to understand God's eternal purpose in all his works, in order to know what commands, promises, and threatenings are contained in the Bible; yet it is necessary to understand his eternal and ultimate design in creation, in order to understand the wisdom, the goodness, and the justice of the commands, promises, and threatenings contained in the Bible. Should we suppose for a moment, that God never has formed any supreme and ultimate end in his works, what reason should we have to love him, to obey him, or to submit to him? Why should we love a Being supremely for creating the world, forming us and other rational creatures, and governing us and all other created objects? If he has not formed a perfectly wise, consistent, connected, and benevolent design; it is certain to a demonstration, that he never will, and never can form such a design. And if no such design has been formed in his own mind; then he cannot know, nor can any of his

creatures know, but the final result of all his works of creation, providence, and redemption, will be nothing but sin, misery, and perfect confusion. And would he be worthy of supreme love, obedience, and submission, should such be the final result of all he has done, or ever will do? What if we can understand the command to love God with all the heart, the command to love our neighbor as ourselves, the command to rejoice, that the Lord reigns, and the command to do all things to his glory; without understanding the doctrine of his own fixed, eternal, and benevolent purpose to do all things in the wisest and best possible manner; could we understand either the goodness of his character, or the justice of his commands, or the rectitude of his government? Or could we properly, clearly, and consistently understand any one thing contained in the Bible? It is, therefore, absolutely necessary to understand God's eternal purpose, or the doctrine of divine decrees, in order to understand his word.— It is of all doctrines contained in the Bible, the most important in itself, and the most important to be understood, believed, and loved; because all other doctrines depend upon it.

2. If God has revealed in his word, that complete consistent, and connected system of divine truth, which he formed and fixed in his own mind, before the foundation of the world; then it is necessary, in order to *preach* his word plainly,

instructively, and profitably, to explain, and prove, and inculcate the doctrine of decrees. Those, who view this doctrine as doubtful, or dark, or difficult to understand, would have preachers wholly pass over this doctrine, or mention it very seldom and cursorily. But people in general would have it never mentioned, only to disprove and condemn it. This would be a very strange fact, were it not so common. It is in reality strange, that those who profess to believe, that the Bible contains a revelation of God's will, or his ultimate design in the creation of the world, which comprises all his other purposes and designs, should suppose it possible to preach the doctrines of the Bible plainly, without preaching and inculcating that important doctrine, upon which all other doctrines of the Gospel depend, and without which they are neither intelligible, important, nor profitable. But since the doctrine of decrees is true, and the most important doctrine in the Bible, and the only key to unlock the hidden mysteries, or truths of the gospel, it is the indispensable duty of gospel ministers, to explain, prove, defend, and inculcate the doctrine of decrees. This they may do, since God has plainly revealed it in his word; and this they must do, in order to preach any one doctrine or duty of the gospel plainly, faithfully and profitably. If their people are unwilling to hear it preached, this is no reason why they should not preach

it; but a weighty reason why they should. They will continue to need to hear this doctrine, till they cease to disbelieve it, and become reconciled to it; and then they will desire to hear it, for their own edification, and growth in grace. Paul felt himself under indispensable obligation, to declare *all the counsel of God*, and not to keep back any thing that was profitable to men, whether they would hear, or whether they would forbear. And his practice speaks louder than words, that it is profitable to preach the doctrine of decrees.

3. If the Bible be plain and easy to be understood; then the reason why men find it so hard and difficult to understand its doctrines and duties, is because they are *totally or partially* depraved.—These doctrines and duties are *plain* to those who read or hear the Bible, under the influence of a wise and understanding heart.—It must be owing, therefore, to a *totally or partially* depraved and selfish heart, if any find it to be hard and difficult to understand the great and essential doctrines and duties, which God has plainly revealed in his word, and which mere babes in years and knowledge can understand. It is easy to see why all that God has revealed in his word, should be hard and difficult to understand, by those who are *totally or partially* depraved. For all that God has revealed in his word is an *expression* of pure *benevolence*, which is diametrically

contrary to every exercise of selfishness in the human heart. If we now consider some of the doctrines and duties revealed in the Bible, we may clearly see, why they appear so hard and difficult to understand by men in general. Why does the doctrine of God's decrees appear so hard and difficult to understand, by those who complain of it? The reason is, because that doctrine expresses all the benevolence, that God ever has acted out, or ever will act out, towards the whole intelligent creation; and which is diametrically opposite to every selfish feeling in the heart of every totally or partially depraved creature.— Why is the doctrine of self-denial so hard to understand? It is because it is perfectly opposite and disagreeable to a selfish heart.— Why is the doctrine of supreme love to God so hard to understand? Because men naturally love themselves supremely. Why is the doctrine of a man's loving his neighbor so hard to understand? It is because he naturally loves himself wholly. Why is the doctrine of total depravity so hard to understand? It is because men are selfish, and wise to justify, rather than condemn themselves. Why is the doctrine of regeneration so hard to understand? It is because they are so selfish, and love their own selfishness, that they do not desire to have it destroyed. Why is the doctrine of the atonement so hard to understand? It is because men are so selfish,

that they cannot be willing to be wholly dependent upon another for salvation. Why is the doctrine of election so hard to understand? It is because sinners are so selfish, that they cannot be willing, that God should save any person, if he does not save themselves. Why is the doctrine of eternal punishment so hard to understand? It is because sinners are so selfish, that they cannot bear the thought, that God should do right and seek his own glory, rather than the personal good of individual creatures. But to proceed no further in this way, I may say in a word, that the only reason why men find any doctrine, or duty in the Bible hard to understand, is because their selfish hearts blind their understanding and conscience. If their hearts were entirely or partially good, they would find their difficulties vanish. This thousands of atheistical, deistical, and erroneous sinners have found to be true, by their own experience.

4. If the whole word of God be plain and easy to understand; then we see why the plainest and most important truths in the word of God, are supposed and represented as the hardest to be understood. It is well known, that this is the case. No doctrines are so much complained of, as the doctrine of decrees, the doctrine of total depravity, the doctrine of regeneration, the doctrine of disinterested love, the doctrine of unconditional submission, the doctrine of divine sovereignty, the doctrine

of immediate compliance with the gospel. These are certainly the plainest and most important doctrines contained in the Bible.—Why then are they supposed to be the hardest to understand?—The reason is plain; it is because they are the most benevolent, and the most disagreeable to a selfish heart. Sinners cannot bear to hear them explained, proved, defended, and inculcated; because they carry conviction and pain to their selfish feelings; and the greatest pain, that they ever feel in this life.

5. If it be hard for those who have a partially, or totally selfish heart, to understand the plain and important truths of the gospel; then all men are extremely exposed to fall into religious errors. Any errors are more pleasing to a selfish heart, than any of the truths revealed in the Bible.—Hence when sinners hear errors preached, or propagated, they are in danger of giving a listening ear. Errorists always have the selfish hearts of men on their side; and they never fail to address their selfish feelings with peculiar zeal and warm expectations of success.

6. If the doctrines and duties revealed in the Bible are easy to be understood; then men never have any excuse for not knowing their duty. They have no excuse for not knowing what to believe. And no excuse for not knowing how they should feel and act in respect to God—in respect to themselves—and in respect to

others. God never places any man in a situation in which he is under a natural inability to know his duty. And therefore no person can ever find an excuse for practical ignorance.

7. If these doctrines and duties revealed in the Bible are plain and easy to be understood; then men can never find an excuse for not doing their duty. They cannot plead their ignorance of duty, which is altogether sinful. And they cannot plead unwillingness to do their duty, which is still more criminal. If they neglect their duty they are slothful servants—and must be condemned out of their own mouth. Hear then and immediately obey this command of God—"My son, give me thine heart."

THE MERCIFUL PURPOSE OF GOD.

Mercy is commonly and properly used in the same sense as grace. Grace and mercy are distinct from mere goodness. God may be good to the holy and happy, but he cannot be gracious or merciful to any but sinful and guilty creatures. God's having mercy on sinners, therefore, implies that they need his mercy. But though sinners are generally ready to allow in words, that they need the mercy of God; yet they are far from a proper sight and sense of their sin and guilt. Hence it is highly important, that they should be convinced of their guilty and perishing condition. Here it may be observed,

1. That they have forfeited all good at the hand of God. The least transgression of the divine law is a complete forfeiture of the divine favor. The moment Adam transgressed the divine prohibition to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, he forfeited all future good. God might with propriety have refused to bestow any favor upon him in future. But sinners have transgressed not only in one, but in ten thousand instances. They have gone astray as soon as they were born and never returned. God has commanded them to love him with all their hearts, but they have hated him with all their hearts.—God has required them to do every thing to his glory; but they have done nothing to his glory.—They have lived in a constant course of disobedience to God all their days. By their sinful conduct, they have forfeited all good. God may righteously deprive them of life and all the blessings of life and never bestow upon them another favor.

2. They deserve eternal destruction. “The wages of sin is death.” Sin deserves God’s wrath and curse, both in this life and in that which is to come. The least sin deserves an everlasting punishment at the hand of God, to whom it belongs to punish sinners according to their desert. Though all transgressions of the divine law are not equally heinous; yet the least deserves a punishment that shall never end. And though men

have no right to punish sin according to its desert, but only according to its tendency; yet God has a right to punish sin according to its real desert. Hence all sinners, without a single exception, deserve eternal destruction at the hand of God. And should he treat them according to their deserts, he would instantly let loose his wrath upon them and sink them into endless perdition. In this situation they constantly stand in need of divine mercy.

3. Sinners are actually condemned by the divine law. It is written, both in the Old Testament and New, “Cursed is every one, that continueth not in all things written in the law to do them.” This is a sentence of eternal death to every impenitent sinner. Accordingly Christ says, “He, that believeth not, is condemned already.” This sentence of condemnation God may any day or moment put into execution. Nothing but mere mercy prevents sinners, from day to day, from falling under the weight of that eternal punishment, to which they stand condemned. For the law, by which they are condemned, is perfectly holy, just and good.—And the whole intelligent universe must approve the justice of God, should he immediately separate them from all good to all evil for ever. So that they stand on slippery places, and the next step they take, they know not but may place them in hopeless ruin. This is a dangerous situation, and

the danger will appear greater, if we consider,

4. That God hates sinners with perfect hatred. He has always had his eye upon them. He has seen them in all their ways. He has looked on their hearts. He has seen all the enmity and opposition of their hearts to him. He has observed all the weapons of rebellion, which they have carried in their hands, and in their hearts, against his holiness and glory.—He has hated them, and still hates them, as really as he hates those, who are actually in a state of darkness and despair; and as really as he will hate the ungodly at the last day. Hence it is written, “He, that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.” The God of infinite holiness “is angry with the wicked every day;” and his wrath and anger constantly increase. Sinners rise up and lie down, go out and come in, eat and drink, sleep and work, under the wrath of their supreme Judge, by whom they are already condemned to eternal punishment. Besides,

5. All things, with which they are connected, unitedly tend to prepare them for aggravated ruin. Time enhances their guilt. Religious advantages and opportunities enhance their guilt. Public and private instructions enhance their guilt. Their own feelings and exertions under the means and restraints of divine grace, enhance their guilt. The strivings of the

divine Spirit in connection with the calls of the gospel, above all things, enhance their guilt. They are every moment treasuring wrath against the day of wrath. They are in the most guilty, wretched and dangerous condition, in which they can be on this side of eternal burnings. They stand in perishing need of mercy. And unless mercy interpose for their deliverance, they will be punished in hell for ever, as certainly as they now exist.

It is now proposed to show—*That God will certainly have mercy upon some such guilty and wretched creatures.* God has said, “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.” Upon this divine declaration, the apostle asserts, “He hath mercy on whom he will have mercy.” These passages imply that God will have mercy upon some of the perishing children of men. And certainly, if they are all guilty, and condemned, and deserve eternal destruction, he has a right to have mercy upon one and not another; or to save a part and not the whole. Among a number of condemned malefactors, the prince always claims a right to pardon one and not another. And the exercise of this right is never deemed to be inconsistent with the most perfect justice and moral rectitude. It would be reproachful to the Deity, to suppose that divine sovereignty is not equal to human sovereignty; or that God

has not as good a right to dispose of his own guilty creatures, as earthly princes have to dispose of their disobedient subjects. But the point before us is not to justify the sovereignty of God, but only to show that he actually bestows his sovereign mercy upon some of our sinful race. Here then let it be observed,

1. That God has determined to save some of mankind. He has not told us how many he means to save, but he has told us, that he means to save a certain number, whom he chose to salvation before the world was created.—The doctrine of personal election to eternal life is clearly taught in the Bible. The apostle says, “Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it; and the rest were blinded.” To the saints of Ephesus he says—“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ; according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ unto himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.” He says to the Thessalonians, “We are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth.”—

And in the account which is given of his preaching in a certain place, it is said, “as many as were ordained to eternal life believed,” From these texts and many others, that might be cited, it is evident that though God has not determined to save all men, yet he has determined to save some. And if God from eternity determined to save some of mankind, we may be certain that he will execute his purpose and have mercy upon all those, whom he has chosen and appointed unto salvation. Though we could not draw any conclusion from the divine character respecting the salvation of sinners, yet we may justly conclude from the declaration of the divine determination, that some of our race will be made the subjects of grace and heirs of heaven. If God has determined to save some, he certainly will have mercy on the vessels of mercy, whom he has ordained to eternal life.

2. God has opened a door of mercy to sinners through the mediation and atonement of Jesus Christ. Though God could not forgive the guilty without an atonement and though the guilty could not make any atonement; yet Christ by his death on the cross has made a complete atonement for the sins of the whole world. By his dying the just for the unjust, he has laid a foundation for God consistently with his character and government to have mercy on whom he will have mercy. We read, “If any man sin, we

have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." And again—"God has set forth Christ to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness, that he might be just and the justifier of him, that believeth in Jesus."—Now since God has given his Son to die, to make an atonement for sin and to open the way for the display of his mercy in the salvation of sinners, we may conclude that he will actually have mercy on some sinners and not suffer him to die in vain. Since God has made all things ready, on his part, for the salvation of sinners; and since he has invited all to come and accept of mercy, he will undoubtedly cause some to enjoy the great salvation, which he has provided at the infinite expense of the divine Redeemer's death. He did not form the plan of redemption without determining the end to be answered by it, which was to display the exceeding riches of his grace in the eternal salvation of some of the perishing children of men. This was an end worthy of God to propose and worthy of God to accomplish.—And since he determined from eternity to save a certain number of mankind and since he has sent his Son to lay a foundation for their redemption by his death on the cross, we may be certain he will save that certain number, if he

be able to do it. And this leads me to observe,

3. That God is able to save all those, whom he has ordained to eternal life. That God is able to save the elect, or whom he pleases, will appear from various considerations.

In the first place, he is able to save them, notwithstanding their connections. Sinners are not only unwilling to be religious themselves, but that any other person should be religious. Parents sometimes oppose the conversion of their children and children the conversion of their parents. Husbands sometimes oppose the conversion of their wives and wives the conversion of their husbands. Brothers and sisters often oppose each other's salvation. The elect are often connected with those, who will do all in their power to prevent their attending to the things, which belong to their everlasting peace. But God is able to surmount all these difficulties and take one of a city and two of a family and lead them to Zion, notwithstanding all their connections can do to hinder it. He is stronger than the strong man armed, and can take whom he pleases from their most intimate connections and carry them to heaven.

In the next place, God can save the elect notwithstanding their situation. Some may be to appearance entirely out of the way of salvation. They may live in such places, or be so employed, that

the means of grace cannot reach them. Their case appears hopeless. But God can carry the means of grace to them, or bring them to the means of grace. He can alter their situation and pursuits, so as to have access to their minds and pour all needful instruction into their understanding. He knows where all the elect shall live and in what circumstances they shall be placed. And therefore he can order their situation so as to be most favorable to their everlasting good; and either save them where they are or remove them to the proper place.

Again—God can save the elect notwithstanding their ill-desert.—Some may be the very chief of sinners and the most guilty among their fellow creatures. But the blood of Christ is sufficient to atone for the greatest sins, and gives God a right to save great as well as small sinners. And if he pleases to take some of the meanest and vilest of mankind and form them vessels of mercy, he can do it, consistently with the perfect purity and holiness of his nature, and the rectitude of his law and government. Indeed, according to the scheme of redemption, through the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, it appears that where sin hath abounded, there grace can much more abound.—And hence the glory of divine grace will most illustriously shine in the pardon and salvation of the most unworthy and guilty of the human race.

Again—God is able to save the elect notwithstanding all they can do to prevent it. They are naturally as unwilling to be saved as the rest of mankind. And they are naturally disposed to do all in their power to prevent being awakened, convinced and converted. They are unwilling to hear divine truths; they are unwilling to understand them. They do always resist the Holy Ghost and oppose God in every step he takes to enlighten their minds and awaken their consciences. But he is able to renew them and to remove the ground of their opposition. He can take away their hearts of stone and give them hearts of flesh. He can slay the enmity of their hearts and reconcile them to himself. He can make them willing in the day of his power to submit to the terms of mercy. He can shed abroad his love in their hearts, form them into his own image and make them meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. Thus it appears, that God can and will have mercy on whom he chooses to have mercy. He can and will save all, whom he has appointed unto salvation.

The subject, which is under our present consideration, suggests the following remarks.

1. Since all mankind need the mercy of God, there is reason to rejoice that he will certainly save some. The doctrine of personal election is the peculiar glory of the gospel. The whole gospel

arises from the purpose of God to save the elect. The doctrine of election is far more glorious than the doctrine of universal salvation. This doctrine sets the grace of God in the clearest and fairest light. The grace of God will shine more bright in saving the elect, while they are surrounded and opposed by the non-elect, then it could shine in saving all mankind. God will do more in saving a part than he would have done in saving the whole human race. The salvation of all mankind would have been easy in comparison of saving the elect only, against all the delusions, wickedness and enmity of the non-elect. The power, wisdom, mercy, faithfulness and sovereignty of God are vastly more conspicuous in the preservation, and salvation of Noah, Abraham, Moses and Paul than they would have been, if they had not been surrounded by such floods of error and wickedness. And if none were left to perish, it could not have been seen from what the elect are saved. The endless wickedness and torment of the non-elect will forever manifest the exceeding riches and glory of divine grace in the salvation of the elect. There is then reason to rejoice that God will save a part and only a part of mankind.

2. It is unreasonable for sinners to complain of the doctrine of election. It is the only foundation of hope respecting the salvation of human beings. Not one of

mankind would ever have been saved, if God had not determined to save some. This determination is grace—astonishing grace. The objection of sinners to the doctrine of election is opposition to the riches and glory of divine grace. And such opposition is the most direct, violent and malignant enmity against the glory of God himself. Sinners hate God and the brightness and beauty of his glory as much as they hate the doctrine of election.

3. None can heartily embrace the gospel, who do not love the doctrine of election. This doctrine is interwoven with the gospel and cannot be separated from it. Such opinions, affections, enjoyments and exertions in respect to religion, as oppose the doctrine of election, oppose the foundation, on which the whole gospel and the whole glory of divine grace in the salvation of sinners, are established. To love the gospel without the doctrine of election is as impossible as it is to love the gospel without loving God. They, who hate the doctrine of election, hate God and the glory and grace of the gospel.

4. If God will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, then none have any reason to hope they are subjects of his saving mercy, until they are willing he should have mercy on whom he will.— So long as any persons are unwilling that God should have mercy on whom he will according to his eternal purpose for the glory of

his name, they oppose God as really as any sinners on earth or in hell. And while they oppose God they are under his wrath and curse, and have not the least reason to think that they are subjects of his saving mercy. It is against the purpose and conduct of God in having mercy on whom he will have mercy, that his enemies have opened their mouths with the greatest impiety in all ages. And no one can be justly accounted a friend of God or of his true gospel, until he loves and praises God for having mercy on whom he will have mercy. PAUL.

THE APOSTLE'S CONDEMNATION OF
FALSE TEACHERS.

No IV.

*The Apostle's reasons for censuring
and condemning false teachers.*

Paul was a man of learning and knew the difficulties, which are to be found in the arts and sciences. He was sensible by his own experience, that in every branch of knowledge there are some doubtful and difficult points, which no human understanding can fully comprehend. He had studied the Scriptures of the Old Testament in the original languages and knew there were many things hard to be understood and explained. He had studied human nature and was well acquainted with the prejudices of the human mind, arising from education, from peculiar connections and situations in life and from a thousand other causes.—

And above all, he knew by fatal experience the full force of religious error and delusion. He had been deeply involved in the most fatal errors of the day, in which he lived. He had fully embraced the false doctrines of the Scribes and Pharisees. He had studied their false scheme of religion; he had heartily embraced it; and built all his hopes for eternity upon it. Hence he was most zealously engaged to defend his false scheme of religion and to oppose and destroy every scheme and doctrine, which differed from it. Besides, he verily thought he was perfectly correct in his sentiments. His conscience was satisfied and his hopes were strong and raised to the highest degree of confidence. He felt himself above refutation and conviction. He was not afraid to hear Stephen preach; nor to hear the christians dispute; but boldly presumed to attack them by his tongue, by his authority and by all the weight of his influence. All this appears from his own account of himself before his conversion. At Jerusalem he publicly made the following declaration; "Men, brethren and fathers, hear ye my defence, which I make now unto you. I am verily a man, a Jew, born in Tarsus, in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day. And I persecuted this way

unto the death, binding and delivering into prison both men and women." Of the prejudices of his education he reminds the Galatians. He says "ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God and wasted it; and profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers." No man was better able to judge of the weakness, prejudice and fallibility, which are natural to mankind than Paul. And he was especially acquainted with religious errors and prejudices and particularly with the religious prejudices of the Jews. The persons, whom he condemned, were Jews, who had been educated in that false scheme of religion, which he once believed and most zealously defended. The question now is, how Paul could reasonably and consistently condemn men for believing and propagating the same errors, which he once firmly believed, heartily loved and boldly defended. In answer to this question I would observe,

1. Paul *knew*, that the gospel, which he preached, was true, and that what they preached was false. He had altered his religious opinions. He once thought, that the Scribes and Pharisees were right in their sentiments. But he had found the difference between thinking he was right and know-

ing he was right. He verily thought he was right in embracing the traditions of his fathers and the doctrines of the Pharisees. But when he received the gospel from Christ himself, then he not only thought the gospel was true, but he knew it to be divine and infallible truth. And by knowing the gospel to be true, he equally knew that his former religious sentiments were entirely false and groundless. Hence he had a right, upon the ground of certain knowledge, to condemn the false teachers in Galatia. He knew what their sentiments were; for he had once been of the same persuasion; and he knew that they were false and contrary to the whole scheme of the gospel.—This gave him just ground to condemn any man, who pretended to preach the gospel and yet preached another gospel, or a scheme of sentiments, which struck at the foundation of the whole scheme of salvation through the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. Paul knew, not only the truth of the Gospel, but that its truth was level to every one's capacity. He perfectly understood the fundamental doctrines of the gospel. He saw the nature and connection of the whole system of divine truth. He knew that Christ meant his gospel should be revealed to babes, and be level to the lowest capacity. And he knew that it was clearly intelligible to every impartial and honest mind. He was a hearer of the

gospel long before he embraced it. He knew how plainly Christ and the apostles preached. He knew that they clearly proved from the Old Testament that Jesus was the Christ, the Savior of the world. He knew that the doctrines of the gospel were plain and easy to be understood by every person, who was sensible of his guilty and perishing condition by nature. Hence he knew that the false teachers, who had heard the gospel and pretended to preach, might have understood it. Their errors were not owing to want of capacity, but to the want of an honest heart. And though they were sincere in their errors, yet they were not more sincere than he had been, while he embraced the same false notions. And he knew, that all the time he retained his errors, he might have seen the truth of the gospel and embraced its infinitely important doctrines. Hence he knew by his own experience, that the false teachers might have known the true gospel and preached it, instead of another and totally false scheme of sentiments.— And this was a good reason for his condemning their errors and their preaching.

3. Paul knew that their prejudices against the true gospel were no excuse for not embracing and preaching it. He knew what their prejudices were, for he had had the same to the highest degree. He once accounted the gospel a cunningly devised fable. He once felt perfect opposition to its self-

denying doctrines. His mind was once filled with bitterness against the true way of salvation. But he had been thoroughly convinced, that all his former prejudices and opposition to the gospel were totally groundless and inexcusable. He knew that his former blindness had been owing to the total depravity of his heart. He knew that his former ignorance had been voluntary and that he might, if he would, have seen the truth, and embraced the doctrines of the gospel, all the time they were opposed and resisted by him. He knew, therefore, that his sincerity in his errors was no excuse for his disbelieving and rejecting the gospel. Hence he certainly knew, that the false teachers, whom he condemned, were totally inexcusable and guilty for their unreasonable ignorance, prejudice and opposition to the gospel. He knew their prejudices and the cause of them; and he knew the cause was altogether criminal and ought to be condemned both by God and man.

4. Paul knew, that if these false teachers persisted in believing and loving another gospel, which they preached, they must be finally lost. He had experienced the fatal tendency of the very errors, which they believed and taught. They had nearly ruined him. They had kept him in that fatal ignorance of his own heart, which would have proved his destruction, if it had not been removed. He had found by experience, that

there was no other way of salvation than by faith in Jesus Christ. He had found that no man could be justified and saved by his own works and with an heart opposed to the true character of God and the way of salvation by a crucified Redeemer. Hence he knew, that those, who preached another gospel and embraced another and false scheme of salvation must be finally lost, if they finally persevered in their errors. Hence he had a good right to say, let them be accursed. Let those, who voluntarily reject the only way of salvation, revealed in the gospel of Christ and embrace another gospel, be finally lost. They were in the road to ruin and Paul knew it; and therefore he had good reason to warn them of their danger and denounce the curse, to which they were exposed. I may add,

5. Paul knew, that their preaching another gospel would eternally destroy all those, who heartily embraced it. He had experienced the danger of hearing and believing false teachers as they were. He was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel. He had imbibed his fatal errors. He had found the dreadful effects of erroneous instructions. He knew, therefore, that any scheme of doctrines, contrary to the gospel, would lead those, who heartily embraced it, to destruction. He knew the propensity of mankind to embrace fatal errors, for he had felt that propensity in the most sensible

manner. Hence he was most tenderly concerned for the Galatians, whom he had labored to bring to the saving knowledge of the saving truths of the Gospel. He knew, that if those, who preached another gospel, should be successful, they would forever ruin the precious and immortal souls of their hearers. And hence he knew, that he had a right to denounce their false and fatal teachers to prevent their own destruction. He well remembered what his Lord had said concerning the same sort of teachers, as were corrupting the Galatians. "If the blind lead the blind, they shall both fall into the ditch." Though, therefore, the curse denounced against those, who preached another gospel, is awfully solemn and severe, yet the apostle had abundant reason to denounce it and record it for the admonition of preachers and hearers to the end of time.

APOLLOS.

SUCCESS OF MISSIONS.

No. I.

Messrs. Editors,

Residing in a part of the country where I frequently hear aspersions cast upon missionaries, and where it is sometimes confidently asserted that no success has hitherto attended missionary labours, I have been led to examine the subject of missions in order to ascertain whether there was any foundation for such assertions. So far as they are believed, their influ-

ence counteracts that spirit of diffusive benevolence which characterizes so many of the institutions of the present age. Though it be allowed that the spread of the gospel in the heathen lands is desirable, yet if, after a fair experiment, it is found that all the money and labor bestowed upon the heathen are lost, and that all efforts to evangelize them are likely to prove fruitless—that “our missionaries in the east and west and south are wearing out their lives, and living on public charity without witnessing any beneficial result from their labors,” this fact would doubtless quench the ardour, and diminish the efforts of the friends of missions. But in examining the authentic documents, I have found that this objection, so often repeated against missions, is groundless. The fact is far otherwise and instead of presenting a cause for discouragement it only tends to animate to increased zeal and extended efforts.

The success which has attended the missionary efforts of the past and present ages furnishes indubitable evidence that these efforts are the means, by which “the Lord shall build up Zion, make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord.” The circumstance, that *no more* has been accomplished, is no cause for relaxation, while the fact that *so much* has been accomplished is full of encouragement. The *one* only shews that the means

have been very inadequate, and calls for their increase; while the *other* teaches that nothing done in this good work shall be in vain. In the words of another, “The wilderness has not assumed the aspect of Eden in a moment, and we did not expect it, but one green spot after another has appeared and every thing indicates that it will ere long open upon the eye in all the richness and beauty of a bright and vernal landscape.”

As the alleged want of success has probably prevented many contributing their aid to this work, and as no objection could be more groundless, a brief narrative of facts may be useful to the readers of your valuable Magazine. In this narrative the writer will studiously preserve the phraseology of the original and authentic documents, except when obvious reasons require a deviation. Before entering directly upon the consideration of facts relative to the success of missions at the present time, it may be gratifying to notice briefly the missionary spirit and labours of the first settlers of New-England. Our forefathers had a truly missionary spirit. It seemed to be a primary object with them to extend the happy influence of that religion, for the enjoyment of which, they came to this western world. They were not satisfied, when they had found an asylum, in which, they could worship God without molestation, agreeable to the dictates of their consciences, but they were desir-

ous that the natives of the wilderness should participate with them in the blessings of the gospel.—The most distinguished of the missionaries to the Aborigines of New England were Eliot and Mayhew.

Eliot, commonly called the Apostle to the Indians, was settled in the ministry at Roxbury in 1632. He was happy among his people. But his benevolence was too expansive to be confined by parochial limits, while the heathen on his borders were perishing for lack of vision. He applied himself to the study of the Indian language. In a short time he was able to speak it intelligibly, and soon published an Indian Grammar, at the end of which he added as his motto, "Prayers and pains through faith in Christ will do any thing." Under the influence of this sentiment, he entered upon his missionary labors. Says his Biographer, "The tribes that roamed through the desert became dear to him, like his own people, and he often forsook the charms of civilized and cultivated society to reside with men, who were not only unacquainted with every thing called *urbanity*, but who wanted comfortable means of subsistence; with whom he would associate days and weeks to instruct them in divine things—and also acquaint them how they could improve their condition upon the earth. He partook with them in their hard fare, with locks wet with the dews of the night, and ex-

posed to attacks from the beasts of the forests."

When he began his mission there were about seventeen or twenty tribes within the limits of the English planters. Through his influence many of them soon became sensible of their need of instruction, and expressed their desires to change a savage for a civilized life. Undismayed by opposition, his labors were unwearied through all the surrounding country. And all his efforts were successful. He translated the Bible into the Indian tongue, and established schools for the instruction of the natives. The character of the Indians was gradually changed. In 1674 there were fourteen towns of christianized Indians. In 1687 there were eighteen christian assemblies and six churches. These christianized Indians held a rank decidedly superior to other natives.

Soon after Elliot commenced his missionary labors, the celebrated Mayhew imbibed the same spirit, and engaged in similar labors on Martha's Vineyard. After having learned the language of the natives, he went from house to house, to convince them of their fallen and degraded state, and inform them of the way of salvation by Jesus Christ.

He did not expect that the religion of the natives which was connected with the earliest associations would be changed at once for the christian religion. But by a disposition to encounter difficul-

ties and persevere amidst trials he was led at last to reap the reward of his labors. Several became seriously impressed by divine truth, and the way was prepared for public worship among them. The influence of this single missionary was soon very extensively felt.

Indians of distinction were favorably impressed, and some cordially embraced the gospel. Some of these became zealous in their efforts to assist the missionary.— Their influence extended to others, and soon whole families embraced the christian religion. On one occasion, after a discourse by one of the natives, twenty-two professed to be penitent for their past sins. At another time fifty came in one day to join the worshippers of God. Within eight years two hundred and eighty two were brought to renounce their false religion. The influence of this change upon the savages was very salutary. They now bound themselves to be governed by christian principles. On this basis a civil society was formed, rulers appointed, and schools established for the instruction of their children.

Finding his labors too extensive and arduous for one, he left the country for England to solicit aid. The ship in which he embarked was cast away and he was never heard of again. His venerable father, then Governor of the Island, had always taken a deep interest in the mission, and now finding no probability of obtaining

a regular minister, he was induced to attempt the work himself.— Though about seventy years of age he applied himself with diligence to the study of the Indian language and condescended to become a missionary among the poor natives under his authority. He labored successfully among them until he was ninety three years old, and then left the work to a pious grandson. Such was the success of this mission that this grandson of the venerable Governor, and son of the first missionary among them, had the satisfaction to see fifteen hundred praying Indians, which was about two thirds of the whole number on the Island. The success of missionaries continued in the Mayhew family for more than a century and a half, and under their influence the whole island became christianized.

By the labors of Eliot and the Mayhews the character and the condition of the natives were greatly changed. The influence of the christian religion was seen in all their concerns. They became moral, industrious, and in a good degree civilized. By these missionaries a good foundation was laid for civil and religious society among the Indians. Had their pious labors been followed up by a succession of faithful and devoted missionaries we doubt not their influence would have counteracted those causes which corrupt and degrade the Indian, or make him flee before the white man. But

in order to see the triumphant success of missionary efforts, we must consult the history of those stations where the heathen are not so fluctuating, as were the aborigines of New-England. This we propose to do in future numbers. From this brief narrative we learn, that the Indians are capable of being christianized and civilized, and also how much may, by the divine blessing, be done by the well directed labors of a few pious and devoted missionaries.

W.

A PASTORAL ADDRESS

TO THE CHURCHES AND CONGREGATIONS IN CONNECTION WITH THE EVANGELICAL CONSOCIATION OF RHODE-ISLAND.

Christian and dear Brethren and Friends—Allow the Consociation to address you on the subject of the state of religion among us and to urge you to the exercise of that charity and to those exertions which are necessary to our prosperity.

It is the glory of our denomination, and one of the clearest evidences of its being founded in the truth, that it admits in consistency with itself of the most extensive exercise of charity possible.—While we professedly believe that an atonement is made for the sins of the world, and that salvation is offered to all men, we consider and love as christian brethren all who give evidence of repentance and faith; and, while we admit the validity of the ministry of all other

christian denominations in preaching and administering the ordinances of the gospel, our communion is open to them and we deny them none of our privileges.

Yet this charity would be abused, and it would be what they could not reasonably require, if we were to consider the tenets which distinguish our own denomination from others of no importance; and, because we are disposed to walk with them in things in which we agree, we should conform to them in those in which we differ.

In some, there is a spirit of charity or candor, which leads them to confound all distinctions among christians, and while they allow them to be essentially right, consider the articles which distinguish them from each other as merely sectarian. But the words, denomination and sect, are far from having the same meaning. The christian religion itself is a denomination, yet is not sectarian, because it is the only true religion, and ought to be universally adopted. If there be among the various denominations of christians one that conforms strictly to the gospel, that denomination is not a sect, but is a true church, not indeed to the exclusion of other churches, but as pure from those sectarian principles which other churches have adopted, and by which they are separated into parties. It is our persuasion that our denomination corresponds to the gospel, and is not sectarian,

and is not founded in the wisdom and partiality of men, but in the word of God.

It is the requirement of scripture to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. Without doctrines there can be no faith, for doctrines are the ground of faith. To contend for the faith, is therefore to contend for the doctrines of the scriptures, or the truths which are revealed and to be believed. To contend earnestly for them implies, at least, that we adhere to them in every trial and against all the opposition which may be made to them. This can excite no reproach or censure from christians of any sect, for if they are not displeased with our being Congregationalist Pede-Baptists, they cannot be consistently displeased with our saying that we are.

While, therefore, we would recommend that charity which looks upon all churches as christian which are founded on the Lord Jesus Christ, and admits them to all the privileges of our communion, and desires and seeks their prosperity in the Lord, we would caution you against sacrificing to a false charity those principles by which we are distinguished from them.

These principles though not essential to salvation, we consider of importance to the purity, the edification, and prosperity of the church of Christ. In particular, we should consider it a great evil were our churches to concede

that their children were not proper subjects of the seal of the covenant; or that baptism administered in any other than a particular mode was not valid. We should think it a great evil, if all those ministers who have received ordination by Presbyters should be denied as not sustaining the office; and if those sermons which have been blessed to the instruction and conversion of many of our fellow men in successive ages should in future be discontinued; and, if that voice of prayer which has been heard in ten thousand of our congregations, and which, in a rich variety of expression has encouraged our devotion, and been appropriated to our circumstances and wants were silenced, or we were confined to any particular form however excellent.

In exhorting you, in the exercise of truly christian charity to support invariably the truths and privileges of our own denomination, we would recommend, that you should do every thing in your power to promote the cause of pure and undefiled religion. Be not partial in your views, but let Christ and his kingdom be the object of your regard. Attend with constancy on his worship and ordinances; walk in his commandments; adorn his doctrines by manifesting a christian temper in all your conduct. Promote the instruction of the young. Seek the prosperity of your respective churches so far as your connection with them requires. Send

the gospel to those who are destitute of its ordinances; and in secret, social, and public prayer, be importunate with God, that he would cause that Spirit which dwells in all his people to prevail over that ignorance and prejudice and depravity by which they are separated from one another, and cause them with similar views and affections to engage in the promotion of his glory—their own peace—and the salvation of their fellow men.

SAMUEL AUSTIN, Moderator.

JOEL MANN, Scribe.

SCHEMES OF SERMONS.

No. II.

THE TRANSPARENCY OF FAITHFUL MINISTERS.

II. Cor. xi. 6. *We have been thoroughly made manifest among you in all things.*

Doc. Faithful ministers manifest themselves to their hearers.

I. Show in what respects faithful ministers manifest themselves. This they do in respect to—1. their sentiments—2. their affections—3. their designs—4. their exertions—5. their afflictions—6. their enjoyments.

II. Show why faithful ministers manifest themselves in these respects. This they do for the following reasons.—1. consistency of

profession—2 propriety of character—3. dignity of their office—4. beauty of conduct—5. real worth.

IMPROVEMENT.

1. They, who are not honest in the respects, which have been mentioned, will desire to conceal themselves.

2. They, who desire to conceal themselves in these respects, show themselves to be unfaithful.

3. Deceitfulness in professed ministers of the gospel is inexpressibly contemptible.

4. A dignified simplicity will distinguish faithful from unfaithful ministers.

5. Faithful ministers will never desire to mingle with a crowd, or join a party.

6. Faithful ministers are not afraid to stand alone.

7. Faithful ministers are prepared to meet all classes of men.

8. Unfaithful ministers will oblige their hearers to show themselves.

9. The Bible must be a constant trouble to unfaithful ministers.

10. To faithful ministers the Bible affords abundant consolation.

11. Faithful ministers have every possible inducement to persevere.

12. The day of judgment an affecting day to ministers, whether they be faithful or unfaithful.

RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 192.)

PALESTINE MISSION.

Jerusalem, as to the general form, may be called a square, or rather a rhomboid, for the north-east and south-west angles are acute, and the north-west and south-east are obtuse. The east wall is nearly straight the whole length. On the north and south sides, the wall makes a bend outwardly, and on the west side it makes an inward bend, so that it would not be very inaccurate to call the city a heptagon.—There are, likewise, many little irregularities in the wall.

Near the bend on the west side is Jaffa gate, called, also, the gate of Bethlehem and the Pilgrim's gate and Bab el Khaleel [the gate of the Beloved, i. e. Abraham.] On the south side is the gate of Zion, called also the gate of David. On the east side, near the pool of Bethesda, is the gate of Stephen, called likewise the Sheep gate and the gate of the Virgin Mary. On the west side, between Calvary and Bezetha, is Damascus gate. These four are the principal gates of the city, and are always open from morning till sunset. There are two other small gates, which are opened only occasionally. One is on the south side, a little west of Mount Moriah. Maundrel calls it the Dung gate. The Mussulmans call it the gate of the Mogrebbins. The other, which Maundrel calls Herod's gate, is on the west side, and goes out from Bezetha. On the east side of Moriah is a seventh gate, or rather a place where there was one when the Christians possessed the city, for it is now completely walled up. Maundrel calls this the Golden gate.

We measured the city by paces, and the following is the result:

From the N. W. corner	Paces.	
to Jaffa gate,	300	} 768 W.
to S. W. corner,	468	
		side.

to Zion gate,	195	} 1149 S.
to the bend in the south wall,	295	
to the gate of the Mogrebbins,	244	} sid e.
to the S. E. corner	415	
to the Golden gate,	353	} 943 E.
to Stephen's gate,	360	
to N. E. corner,	360	} side.
to Herod's gate,	359	
to the bend,	250	} 1419 N.
to Damascus gate,	150	
to N. W. corner,	660	side.

The total is 4279 paces; and allowing five paces to a rod, this gives 856 rods, or about two miles and two thirds for the circumference of the city.—Maundrel measured the city, and judged it to be two miles and a half in circumference. According to Josephus, it was 33 furlongs in circumference before Titus destroyed it. Mount Zion was then included, and the city seems from his description to have extended further north than it does now. The wall of the city is high, but not thick. From counting the rows of stones we suppose the height to be 40, 50, and perhaps 60 feet. There is a castle with two towers, on the west side, a little south of Jaffa gate, to which travellers have given the name of Pisan's Tower. For a little distance, near the north-east corner, there is a trench without the wall, but now nearly filled up.

In regard to the population of Jerusalem, the following estimate seems to us as probably correct as any one we have heard, viz.

Mussulmans,	-	-	-	10,000
Jews,	-	-	-	6,000
Greeks,	-	-	-	2,000
Catholics,	-	-	-	1,500
Armenians,	-	-	-	500
Total,	-	-	-	20,000

The Jews themselves say, that they have only 600 families of Sephartim, or Spanish Jews, and 25 families of Ashkenasim, or Polish Jews. But some think the Jews more numerous than the Mussulmans. They occupy, however, a much smaller part of the city than the Turks and Arabs. The Arminians live in and around their convent on Mount Zion; the Greeks and Catholics have their convents and houses on Mount Calvary. The Turks and Arabs occupy Bezetha, and all the eastern part of the city, and have scattered dwellings in every quarter. The Jews live in the dust between Zion and Moriah. The whole area of the ancient Jewish Temple on Moriah, which now encloses the mosque of Omar, is walled in, and none but Mussulmans are allowed to enter it on pain of death. In and near it are four minarets. There are two others on Bezetha, one on Acra, one on Zion, and two on Calvary placed on opposite sides of the Holy Sepulchre, like the two thieves on the right and left of our Lord.

The Jews have a number of synagogues, all connected together, in the quarter where they live. The church of the holy Sepulchre stands on Calvary. The Catholics have one convent on the same mountain. The Greeks have twelve here, and one near Zion gate. The Arminians have three convents on Mount Zion, a large one and a small one in the city, and another a little without Zion gate, where, it is believed, stood the house of Caiaphas, where Jesus was arraigned, and where Peter denied him. The Copts, Syrians and Abyssinians have also each a small convent. The houses are of stone, most of them low and irregular, with flat roofs or terraces, in the middle of which usually rises a small dome.—The windows are small, and those towards the street have usually strong iron grates for defence, and then fine wooden grates to prevent the women from being seen by those who pass.—The streets are narrow, and most of them irregular. There are but few gardens in the city.

Jerusalem is seen to best advantage from Mount Olivet. We however see most of the city from the terrace of the convent where we lodge. The Temple is seen to the best advantage from the terrace of the Governor's house. Here you see, not a single mosque, but a collection of mosques and oratories. The

two principal buildings are called el Aksa and el Sahbara. Around them the vacant area is covered with green grass, interspersed with paved walks and trees, which furnish an agreeable shade to the loitering Turk. Ali Bey has given a good description of the Temple, and its various buildings, and of the foolish opinions of the Turks concerning them.

Having given an account of the journey of Messrs. Fisk and King through the Desert, and of their arrival at Jerusalem, on the 25th of April, 1823, we now proceed with some extracts from their journal written after their arrival at the Holy City. With these we shall incorporate, in a few places, extracts from a private journal, written by Mr. King during the same period.

April 26, 1823. Called on the governor of Jerusalem with a letter of introduction from the Governor of Jaffa.—He welcomed us to the city, with many compliments. Toward evening we took a walk on mount Zion. A part of it is covered with the tombs of Greek and Arminian Christians. On the east and south sides, it is plowed and cultivated. Near the summit is a little walled village, containing a mosque and a few mussulman's houses. The Jews call this village the City of Zion, and it is generally believed to contain the tombs of David, and Solomon, and the other kings of Israel.

The following day being the Sabbath Mr. Wolff and Abraham Shliffro, a Jew, who seems to have been convinced of the truth of Christianity, called at the rooms of Messrs. Fisk and King, to unite in the appropriate exercises of the day. A number of persons came in, in the morning, to purchase the Scriptures;—but were refused because it was the Lord's day. In the afternoon the Greek priests called to welcome the missionaries to the city, bringing with them various tokens of their friendship.

On the 28th, towards evening, they walked out from Jerusalem, and visited the garden of Gethsemane, the valley

of Jehoshaphat, the pool of Siloah, and the valley of Hinnom.

Garden of Gethsemane.

We went out at Stephen's gate, which is sometimes called the Sheep gate. We then descended the hill, passed the bed of the brook Cedron, which contains no water except in the rainy season, and then came to the Garden of Gethsemane, one of the most affecting and interesting spots on earth. It is a small plat of ground, with a low enclosure of stones. In it stand eight venerable looking olives, which seem as if they might have remained there from time immemorial. The side of the hill was covered with Turkish women, and the road was full of armed Turks of fierce appearance, occasionally firing off their muskets for amusement. It would have been unpleasant, and perhaps unsafe, to remain long in such a place. We could only walk over the field, and indulge a few transitory meditations.

Mr. King's first visit to the Garden of Gethsemane is thus described.

After waiting a little time for two men to accompany me, I went out of the city, passed over the brook Cedron, and entered the Garden of Sorrow. It lies at the foot of the Mount of Olives, and within a stone's cast of the brook Cedron. In it are eight large olive trees, whose trunks show that they are very ancient. They stand at a little distance from each other, and their verdant branches afford a refreshing shade. The land on which they stand, and around them, is sandy and stony, and it appears like a forsaken place. Around it is the appearance of a little wall, composed of small stones, and broken down. On entering this Garden, I requested the two men with me to sit down under one of the olives, which they did, and I went a little distance from them, to another olive, and read the 53d chapter of Isaiah, and also, in the four Gospels, the scenes of that sorrowful night, when the Son of Man was betrayed into the hands of sinners. During this, some dark, fierce looking Bedouins, armed with long spears and swords, advanced on horse-back, and I was not without some fear that they would think me alone, and attack me. After looking at

me very attentively, and at the two men under the olives, at a little distance from me, they passed by. The momentary fear which this excited, bro't to my mind, more impressively, the scene, when Jesus was betrayed, and taken by a multitude, who "came out against him with swords and with staves."

We then followed the bed of Cedron at the foot of Mount Moriah. The hill is high and steep, and the wall of the city stands on its brink. On our left was Mount Olivet, still covered with olive trees. Near the bed of the brook is a small monument, called Absalom's Pillar, and believed by the Jews, to be the one referred to, 2 Sam. 18: 18. It is near the west end of the valley of Jehoshaphat, or the King's dale. Near this is another monument called the Sepulchre of Pharaoh, but why so called, nobody has been able to inform us. The valley of Jehoshaphat was deep, with steep sides. This valley, we are told, runs to the dead Sea, but how far it bears the same name we do not know.

Pool of Siloah.

On the east side of the valley is a small village called Siloah, and back of the village is a hill, distinct from Mount Olivet, which is called the Hill of Offence, because supposed to be the hill, on which Solomon built the High places, mentioned 1 Kings 11: 7. Near the south-east corner of the city, at the foot of Zion and Moriah, is the pool of Siloah, (see Neh. 3: 15) whose water flows with gentle murmur from under the Holy mountain of Zion, or rather from under Ophel, having Zion on the west, and Moriah on the north. The very fountain issues from a rock, twenty or thirty feet below the surface of the ground, to which we descended by two flights of steps. Here it flows out without a single murmur, and appears clear as crystal. From this place it winds its way several rods under the mountain, then makes its appearance with gentle gurgling, and forming a beautiful rill, takes its way down into the valley, towards the south-east.—We drank of the water, both at the fountain, and from the stream, and found it soft, and of a sweetish taste, and pleasant. The fountain is called in Scripture the "the Pool of Siloam." It was to this, that the blind man went,

and washed, and came seeing. John 9:7—11.

As I came from this pool, (Mr. King writes) a Mussulman Arab, that stood near looked at me with all the wildness of a man possessed of the devil, and endeavored, by the distortion of his countenance and the rolling of his eyes, to express towards me the highest contempt and spite possible. I never saw a more frightful figure, except at the Insane Hospital in Paris.

Leaving this place, we pursued our way amidst the roaring of wild Arabs and infatuated Turks, who seemed to be prowling about, in vast numbers, in the valleys and over hills, which made us feel that it was quite unsafe to be without a Turkish Guard. We had with us two men in the Arab dress, but they were Christians, and unarmed.—At this time there are multitudes of Turks here, with their women, from Damascus and other places, come as they say, to visit the tomb of Moses, which they suppose to be two or three hours distant from Jerusalem, towards the Dead Sea. They lie round about Gethsemane and the valley of Jehoshaphat, and it is dangerous for us to go much among them.

The Potter's Field.

South of this valley, rises a mountain of huge ragged cliffs of rocks, between which are little spots of cultivated ground. One of the most rude and rugged spots, and which is close to the valley of Tophet, is pointed out as the field purchased with the money, for which Judas betrayed his Master, and which is called the Potter's field, or the field of blood. Here Judas is said to have been buried, and perhaps it was here he hanged himself. Acts 1:18.—There are trees standing near the brink of huge cliffs and precipices, and if he hung himself on one of these trees and fell, it is very easy to see why he should have burst asunder, and all his bowels have gushed out. There are many tombs in it hewn out of the solid rock, and it looks desolate, and is uninhabited.

From the valley of Jehoshaphat we turned west into the valley of Hinnom, or "the valley of Slaughter," called also Tophet, where the children of Israel caused their children to pass through the fire to Moloch, See Jer. 7:31, 32.—In this valley we pursued our way towards the west at the foot of Mount Zion

and returned through Jaffa gate, to our lodgings.

On the 29th they sold all their remaining copies of the Turkish Testament in the Arminian character, and many more were wanted. One man followed them half way to their lodgings, and begged them, for the love of God, to let him have one. He would not believe them, when they repeatedly assured him, that they had parted with the last copy.

Visit to Bethlehem.

The next day they visited Bethlehem. The journal continues—

We went out at Jaffa gate, crossed the valley west of Mount Zion, ascended a steep rough hill, and then came to a tolerable level road, leading S. S. W. In an hour and a quarter, we came to the Greek convent of the prophet Elias. Thence the road to Bethlehem is a little nearer south. In half an hour from the convent we came to Rachel's tomb; or, at least to the place which Jews, Mussulmans and Christians, all visit as such. Instead of a simple pillar, which Jacob erected, (See Gen. 55, 20.) there is now a stone building, evidently of Turkish construction, which terminates at the top, in a dome.—Within this edifice is the tomb. It is a pile of stones covered with white plaster, about ten feet long, and nearly as high. The inner wall of the building, and the sides of the tomb, are covered with Hebrew names, inscribed by Jews.

West of this place, at a little distance, is a village, now called Ephratah, which has been called by some, Rama. If this were one of the ancient Ramas, it would be easy to see the force of that glowing description of the scene which transpired at Bethlehem, when Herod sent, and destroyed the young children. The lamentations and wailings of bereaved mothers were so great, that they were heard even in Rama, and Rachel sympathized with them; and wept in her grave.

In half an hour from this tomb, we came to the city, where was born, 1800 years ago, "a Savior who is Christ the Lord," where "the day spring from on high" first visited our world, where the

Savior incarnate was first adored by man. As we entered the city, a multitude of little children, dirty and ragged, came out to meet us, and holding up their little hands to receive alms, they began to sing, "Pilgrims go in peace," "Pilgrims go in peace."

The Greek, Catholic and Arminian convents are together, a little east of the village, and encloses the supposed place of our Savior's nativity.

Here they were introduced by a letter from the Greek convent at Jerusalem. Having passed through the church, they were conducted to the spot, sacred as the birth-place of our Lord, and to the manger, in which he is said to have been laid. A great number of lamps were burning over these venerated places, and the whole wore an appearance of splendor, widely different from that of a stable.

The field of the Shepherds.

From this place a Greek priest accompanied us to the Shepherd's field. It is twenty minutes ride from Bethlehem, a little south of east. The way to it is rough and stony. Bethlehem itself is on a hill, which seems like a pile of rocks, with here and there a patch of verdure. Between the rocks, however, where it is cultivated, vines, figs and olives appear to grow in luxuriance. On our right as we descended the hill, was a little mean looking village, in which it is believed that the Shepherds lived.

We rode along among the rocks and cliffs, reflecting how David here once tended his flocks, and learned to sing the praises of Jehovah; and how the Prophet Samuel came to anoint him king, and how the Son of David here made his appearance in our world;—when, all at once, a delightful valley, covered with green fields, opened to our view. Its beauty was heightened by the barren rocky hills all around it. As we entered it and rode along, it was

delightful to imagine how a multitude of the heavenly host, came flying down from heaven upon the tops of the mountains, and hovering over this verdant spot, where the flocks were resting, sung, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men." Near one side of the plain is a field of olives, enclosed by a wall, with a subterranean Church in the centre of it. This is pointed out as the very spot where the Shepherds were, when the angel announced to them our Savior's birth. Our guide told us that the Greeks and Catholics had a long dispute about the possession of this place. The case was carried before the Grand Signore, and the Greeks by dint of money gained their cause. In this church the Christian Arabs now assemble for worship. Over this church, are the ruins of another church, and of a convent, which stood above ground. Under an olive tree near by, we sat down, and read Luke 2d: sung, 'While Shepherds watched their flocks by night,' and Hymn 3d, book 1st, and then united in giving thanks to the God of heaven, for the glad tidings which were here announced, and which had come to our ears in a far distant land, and to the ears of our dear christian friends, who were also at this time remembered by us. After this season of devotion we gathered some flowers in the field, and returned to Bethlehem. Many maps and geographies place Bethlehem south east of Jerusalem. It is in fact west of south.

Missionary Herald.

(To be Continued.)

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Several communications of real merit must, for the present, be deferred—being on subjects very similar to the subjects of some others which have already been inserted.

THE CHRISTIAN MAGAZINE.

VOL. I.

AUGUST, 1824.

No. 8.

ORIGINAL COMMUNICATIONS.

THE ANGELS ARE PLEASED WITH THE WORK OF REDEMPTION.

The angels are the first and greatest beings, whom God created. They were created before this world was made. They were joyful spectators of its creation.—In the scriptures, they are represented to be spirits and spirits of superior powers. Their power, their wisdom and their holiness are celebrated in the scriptures.—They are called the mighty angels and the holy angels. And to be wise as an angel of God is used as an expression of the greatest created wisdom. As one star differs from another star in glory, so one angel differs from another angel in natural and moral excellence.—Though the lowest angels are greater and better than the greatest and best of men; yet some of the angels are vastly superior to others. Some are called thrones, principalities and powers. Gabriel and other angels, mentioned by name in scripture, appear to be some of the highest among the highest order of beings. And

these we know have been intimately concerned in promoting the work of redemption. Indeed, all the angels are said to be ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation. The apostle declares that the great scheme of salvation by Christ was designed to furnish the angels with proper objects of contemplation. “And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ; to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to his eternal purpose, which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.” If the plan of salvation was concerted for the contemplation of angels, it is to be believed that they have contemplated it and will contemplate it forever. By the apostle Peter it is said, that the angels desire to look into these things. The work of redemption exhibits such objects as naturally attract the attention and approbation of these holy be-

ings, who love the holy God and his holy works. Hence they are represented as crying one to another, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory." In the work of redemption, which is accomplished on earth, they discover the holiness of the Deity, which, naturally attracts their attention and their affections. And they have peculiar opportunity to look into the great design of redeeming grace. They were spectators of the creation and the fall of man. They were present at the giving of the law at mount Sinai. They were present at the birth of Christ, at his crucifixion, resurrection and ascension into heaven. They were his ministering servants the whole time he was on earth. And they have since attended his apostles and all his sincere followers to this day. While the inhabitants of this world are gazing upon the sun, moon and stars and studying the works and laws of nature, the inhabitants of heaven are looking still more constantly and attentively into the great and glorious scheme of redemption and contemplating the methods employed to carry it into execution. It is the proper business of angels to study the plan of redemption, while they are constantly employed in promoting the glory of God and the honor of Christ by conducting many sons unto glory.

But it is my chief design to show that the angels take pleasure in contemplating the great scheme

of redemption. This is implied in their desiring to look into it. If they have strong desires to contemplate the work of redemption they must take pleasure in surveying it in all its parts, in its design, origin, foundation, connections and consequences. But why do the holy angels take pleasure in contemplating a work, which has given pain and will forever give pain to myriads of rational beings? Several reasons may be given for the pleasure they take in the contemplation of redeeming wisdom and goodness.

1. The work of redemption enlightens their minds in respect to the knowledge of God. Though they have the light of nature and gain much knowledge of God from the things, which he has made; yet they are obliged to study the work of redemption in order to obtain the most accurate and extensive views of the Deity. It is by contemplating the work of redemption, that they discover the incomprehensible mode of the divine existence in a Trinity of persons.— There is no reason to suppose that the angels knew that God existed in three persons, before the scheme of redemption was revealed. For this could not have been discovered by any other of his works. But in this great and glorious work, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, are distinctly brought into view, as three equally divine and adorable persons.— Accordingly we find, that the inhabitants of heaven address these

persons and give praise to him, that sitteth upon the throne and to the Lamb. The more the angels look into the work of redemption, the more clearly they perceive the great mystery of the sacred Trinity and rejoice in it. By the same medium, they gain the fullest and clearest knowledge of the divine perfections. Without the plan of redemption, they may learn the power, and wisdom, and goodness of the Deity. But it is only in the gospel, that they can learn the justice, and grace of God, and his sovereignty in the display of these glorious attributes. In the face of Jesus Christ, they can see the manifold wisdom, the infinite justice and the astonishing, distinguishing and sovereign grace of God. Their knowledge of God was vastly increased by the revelation of the divine purpose to save sinners by the death of Christ. And while God was preparing the way for his incarnation, by looking into the great and gracious design, they made constant and rapid advances in the knowledge of God. And ever since his incarnation they have been discovering more and more of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. When Peter wrote they were still desirous of contemplating the wonders of redeeming love. And they will for ever desire to look into these things and find a peculiar pleasure in the contemplation of them, because they unfold the divine perfections. For nothing gives them so much real

happiness as a view of the character and perfections of the Deity. The knowledge of God is the source and basis of their supreme felicity. And the more they know of God, the more do they rejoice in him.

2. Angels take pleasure in contemplating the work of redemption because it enlightens them into the knowledge of themselves. They were all created at one time and in the full maturity of their intellectual powers. They had no work to do in order to maintain their existence. They were formed perfectly holy and fit for the enjoyment of God. And they had no other test of their fidelity than only loving their Maker and rejoicing in his perfections. Hence their own existence and the noble powers they possessed, were a mystery to themselves. Especially it was a mystery to them that some of their number should be suffered to sin and fall into remediless destruction. From the time of their creation to the fall of Adam, it seems they must have been very ignorant of the end of their being and of the great work for which they were formed. And when this work was pointed out, it appears, that some of them utterly refused to minister to Christ and the heirs of salvation, for which they were banished from heaven and reserved in everlasting chains of darkness. But those, who kept their first estate, joyfully accepted an employment, which gave them peculiar opportunity to contem-

plate the mysteries of redeeming grace. And the more they have looked into this great and glorious design, the more they have become acquainted with themselves and the divine conduct towards them. In the work of redemption they discover many reasons, why they were created first of all intelligent creatures, why they were endowed with such superior powers and faculties, why they were placed in a state of probation, why they were elected while others were reprobated, why they were established in holiness and happiness, while others were doomed to fall and perish; and why these things took place before the human apostacy. In the work of redemption they see, that they were intimately connected with mankind and were to be instrumental both in their fall and recovery. If there be ten thousand worlds, as philosophers dream, yet it is certain, that only the angelic world is connected with mankind and actually concerned in promoting their eternal happiness and misery. And it is by contemplating the work of redemption, that angels discover their connection with this world. And the more they trace this connection, the greater pleasure it gives them to pursue their most benevolent employment. Hence it is, that they are represented to be so sensibly affected with whatever conduces to the prosperity of the church. They rejoice exceedingly, when sinners are converted, and their joy is no less when the ene-

mies of the church are defeated and destroyed. And while they look into the testimony of God, and contemplate the predictions and promises respecting the work of redemption, their knowledge of themselves, as the active instruments of promoting that glorious scheme of divine wisdom and grace, affords them peculiar enjoyment and satisfaction. And at the same time they learn why their former associates in holiness and happiness are what they are and where they are, and allowed to exert their malignant influence over the minds of men. In a word, angels take pleasure in contemplating the work of redemption, because it continually unfolds more and more the end of their being and the mystery of God's dispensations towards them.

3. Angels are pleased with the work of redemption because it enlightens them in the knowledge of mankind. The human race would be a mystery to all other intelligent creatures, were it not for the work of redemption. One generation of men after another are brought upon the stage of life and carried from it and appear to answer no very valuable purpose. They generally live a very low and insignificant life. They do but very little good and a great deal of evil. They bury their noble talents; or employ them in spreading misery and destruction through the world. It seems strange, therefore, that God should not put an end to their existence,

or make it better or worse. But the work of redemption unfolds the mystery. It appears that that glorious scheme of mercy requires such a mixed state of things for the present, in order to give a brighter display of all the perfections of God in the salvation of the elect. It is by the incarnation of Christ, that the angels learn why mankind have such gross bodies and impure spirits; why they live in such a mixed state of good and evil; why God causes the vilest of mankind to enjoy such a profusion of earthly blessings, and the best to suffer such a series of temporal evils; why God does not put an end to the world, nor reform it any faster. It is by looking into the work of redemption, that they discover the reasons of the rise and fall of nations, and of all the changes and revolutions in the kingdoms of men. These are all means of promoting the work of redemption, and the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. The angels take pleasure in tracing the connection of means and ends in the great work of redemption. Their knowledge, and consequently their holiness and happiness are constantly increased by studying the great system of divinity contained in the gospel of our salvation. By comparing predictions with events, they attain to greater and greater improvements in that knowledge, which is the food of holy and benevolent minds.

4. The work of redemption enlightens the angels into the know-

ledge of the universe. It is the gospel only, which unfolds the ultimate end of God in creation. The scheme of redemption combines, connects and unites all parts of the creation of God. It forms a whole, composed of all the parts of the created universe. And nothing but a knowledge of the whole can give a clear and just view of any of its parts. Were the angels acquainted with all heaven and hell, with all the suns and stars, and with all the visible and invisible parts of this lower world; still their knowledge would be essentially defective, without knowing the ultimate end of God in forming the various parts of the creation and their design and use in promoting his ultimate end. This knowledge the scheme of redemption conveys to their minds. For the gospel represents the work of redemption as God's ultimate design in creation. The apostle says, "that he purposed in himself that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might *gather together in one all things in Christ*, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in him." And again he says, "It pleased the father, that in him should all fulness dwell, and having made peace through the blood of the cross, *by him to reconcile all things to himself*; by him, I say, whether they be things on earth or things in heaven." God has made Christ head over all things to the church; and the salvation of the church is the ultimate end

of creation, to which all its parts are subservient. Hence by looking into the scheme of redemption by Christ, the angels discover the ultimate end of God in all his works, which gives them the true knowledge of the universe. It is by studying the work of redemption, that they learn all that can be learned of God and his works. It comprehends all real knowledge and gives entire satisfaction to a wise and holy mind. It is not strange, therefore, that angels are extremely pleased in looking into that mirror, which reflects the greatest light upon the universe. Especially if we consider,

5. That in contemplating God's ultimate end in the work of redemption, they discover that end to be the greatest possible degree of holiness and happiness. The holy angels love holiness and the happy angels love that happiness, which flows from holiness. They are perfectly benevolent and desire to see the highest possible displays of benevolence. They hate misery in itself considered and desire to see it swallowed up in the highest happiness of the universe. And while they contemplate the work of redemption, they see that where sin has abounded, there grace and holiness will much more abound; and where misery has abounded there happiness will much more abound. By the light of the gospel they see that the sin and misery which exist in the universe, and which will exist forever, are subservient

to the existence of the greatest degrees of holiness and happiness. The more they look into the great and glorious scheme of redemption, the more they see of the wisdom and goodness of God, in respect to all the sin and misery that exist in the universe; and the more they are satisfied, that death and every other evil will be swallowed up in victory. The scheme of redemption spreads light and glory over the face of all things in heaven, earth and hell. In the light of man's redemption, they see light in all the dark scenes and dark places of the universe. They are fully convinced, that there is no absolute evil in the creation of God; that is, none but what is necessary to raise the holiness and happiness of the intelligent system to the highest possible degree. This conviction has already taken place in their minds; but yet new light is continually opening upon them, the more they look into the astonishing scheme of redemption, which does now and will forever engage their delightful contemplation. In the great plan of God there are sufficient materials to employ their minds forever in contemplating his great and wonderful works of wisdom and goodness. Their knowledge, their holiness and happiness will continue and increase forever, while they behold the riches of God's glory and the exceeding riches of his grace, as they will be forever displayed with increasing clearness and fulness by the

wonders of redemption through Jesus Christ.

JAMES.

SERMONS—No. VI.

THE RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION OF CHILDREN.

PSALM LXXVIII. 7. *That they might set their hope in God.*

God promised to bestow upon the descendants of Abraham, for many generations, the most important blessings. Yet the bestowment of these blessings God connected with the diligence and fidelity of Abraham, in the government and instruction of his children and household. Of Abraham God said—"For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him." After the law was given at mount Sinai and the people promised obedience, God said, "O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me and keep my commandments always, that it might be well with them and with their children forever." That his ancient people might be obedient and be blessed in their successive generations, God said, "These words, that I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy

children, and shalt talk of them, when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." These divine declarations respecting the religious instruction of children show, that this duty is, in the view of God, an object of the greatest importance. Indeed, the peculiar privileges and enjoyments of his ancient people were suspended upon their performance of this duty. In our context this subject is placed before us in a very striking manner. The psalmist says, "What we have heard and known and what our fathers have told us, we will not hide from their children, showing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and his strength and his wonderful works that he hath done. For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers that they should make them known to their children; that the generation to come might know them, even the children who should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children; *that they might set their hope in God*, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments." This whole passage exhibits the duty and importance of giving religious instruction to the rising generation. And the desired and expected consequence of giving children such instruction is declared in the words of our text. It was, "that they might set their

hope in God." This, then, is the doctrine that lies before us in the present discourse,—That children may hope in God, they must be instructed in religion. To illustrate this doctrine it is proposed,

I. To show for what blessings children should hope in God ;

II. To show the importance of their hoping in God for these blessings ; and,

III. To show that they may hope in God for these blessings, they must be instructed in religion.

It is proposed,

I. To show for what blessings children should hope in God.

1. They should hope in God for the common mercies of his providence. It is God, who gives and preserves the lives of men. It is he, who gives health and all outward blessings. On his providence, mankind are wholly dependent for direction and success in their secular employments and pursuits. All these blessings God bestows and withholds as he pleases. No degree of present prosperity, nor the most promising appearances respecting futurity, can secure the bestowment and enjoyment of the common mercies of divine providence. Yet all mankind, and the young in a special manner, are disposed to rely upon their present prospects for temporal happiness. Children are commonly disposed to set their hope in their parents, in wordly property, in earthly connections, and in their proposed employ-

ments for the blessings they may need in the present life. But many, who have had, in early life, the strongest hopes and the fairest prospects, have soon found themselves destitute and friendless.—On the other hand, many, who, in early life have been destitute and friendless, have found in God a portion and a friend from childhood even to old age. God is the only source of those blessings, which are necessary to the temporal happiness of mankind.—These blessings he provides and distributes as he pleases. And for these blessings the young should look to God and hope in him.

2. Children should hope in God for support under the evils of the present life. The particular afflictions and distresses, which they, who are now young, may be called to experience, cannot be foreseen by any created being. But it is written, " Although affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground ; yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward." From what God has said in his word and from what has been seen in all ages of the world, every person has reason to expect many evils, before his trials on earth shall be finished. Under their afflictions many persons have been depressed and disheartened. And they have wasted their days in grief, and hardened themselves in sorrow. Where they have looked and hoped for support, they have found darkness and trouble.

But if they had set their hope in God, they might have been supported under their heaviest afflictions. For "God is a refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." God has ever been a powerful and faithful friend to the children of affliction and sorrow, who have hoped in his mercy. In a world of constant changes and in the midst of troubles, on whom but God can the young depend for support? They should early set their hope in God for support under the evils they have to meet and endure in this dark vale of tears.

3. The young should hope in God for salvation from endless misery. As all mankind are, by nature, sinners, they deserve the curse of the law. And this curse they must suffer, unless they are pardoned and saved through the mercy of God in Jesus Christ. For God hath said, "the soul that sinneth, it shall die." And the whole gospel shows, that no human being can be saved from endless woe, without the mercy of God. They, who are in early life, are justly exposed to endless misery. Nor can they depend upon their own goodness and innocence for the favour of God. For, as the apostle declares, "we are, by nature, children of wrath." But God offers salvation from deserved punishment unto sinners. And by a good hope through grace, sinners may, in early life, obtain the forgiveness of their sins and the salvation of their souls. They

are capable of having such an hope, as early as they are capable of receiving religious instruction. Many in their childhood and youth have been sensible of their need of salvation from the present and the eternal displeasure of their holy creator. And for this salvation they have truly hoped in the mercy of God. As all the young are sinful and guilty creatures, they need to be pardoned, that they may be saved from endless misery. But it is only in God, that they can safely place their hope of future and eternal salvation.— Having shown for what blessings children should hope in God, it is now proposed,

II. To show the importance of their hoping in God for these blessings.

These blessings are of unbounded importance. And they can be obtained only from God. Nor can they be obtained from him by any persons, who do not truly hope in his name. But to all, who truly hope in God, they are promised and secured. It is therefore as important that children should set their hope in God, as it is that they should receive and enjoy the blessings they need, both in their present and future existence. But we may be more particular in our observations on this part of our subject. And it may be observed,

1. That if children do not hope in God for the blessings they need they will persist in sinning against him. God requires all persons to hope in him and be happy. And

he speaks to the young on this subject with peculiar affection and kindness. They, therefore who refuse to hope in God, reject his most kind and gracious requirements. They reject the counsel of God against themselves. Such conduct is a daring expression of enmity and disobedience against the greatest and best of beings.— In our context there is a description of the Israelites, who perished in the wilderness by their disobedience and unbelief. And they are called “a stubborn and rebellious generation, that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not steadfast with God.” Thus stubborn and rebellious will be all those children, who will not set their hope in God for the blessings they need from him. They cannot refuse to hope in God without being guilty of the most obstinate wickedness against their holy creator. This consideration shows, that it is highly important that children should set their hope in God.

2. If they do not set their hope in God, they will be disappointed in all their expectations of happiness. With their lively and joyful feelings the young are apt to indulge themselves in the most flattering imaginations. And they can hardly believe that a person who does not encourage their expectations of happiness, is any better than an enemy. Yet such hopes as are not founded on the favour and friendship of God, are entirely delusive. If God be not the hope

and portion of the rising generation, they will have their portion on earth; they will receive all their good things in their life-time. And what is man when viewed in the happiest condition on earth? Let divine truth give the answer: “Man, at his best estate, is altogether vanity.” Without the favour of God the blessings of this life are a dream and the fairest prospects the world can present a mere shadow. Without his supporting presence the evils of this life are a burden, which is too heavy for our feeble spirits. Should the young gain the greatest happiness this world can afford, if they do not set their hope in God, what will be their state at death and their condition forever? They will gain nothing that is worthy of their pursuit; and what they do gain must soon be lost. It is certain that their expectations of happiness will perish at death, if they do not place their hope in God. It is then as important, that the young should hope in God, as it is, that, with all their expectations of happiness, they should not find themselves attended with vanity and vexation of spirit through life, and then at death sink into endless disappointment. For unless they set their hope in God, all their expectations of happiness, however confident and delightful, will soon end in despair. It may be observed,

3. Unless the young do hope in God for the blessings they need, they will be subjected to his right-

eous displeasure. Such persons as are not proper objects of divine love and favour, are under the wrath of God even in this life. For it is written, "God is angry with the wicked every day." And again—"He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." God has no delight in the character of sinners, though they in this life be indulged with many privileges and enjoyments. But if they do, through life, persist in their enmity and disobedience against their Maker, they will be formed into vessels of wrath, and fitted for destruction. Unto every soul that doeth evil, God declares he will render indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish. There is no way in which any persons, who do not set their hope in God, can escape his displeasure. They have therefore no good reason to hope for any enjoyment, so long as they continue of their present character. But they have reason to fear every evil they can suffer. For they are already condemned and subjected to the righteous displeasure of their holy Creator. They who are now in childhood and youth, unless they be induced to set their hope in God, cannot expect to enjoy his favour; but they must forever suffer his displeasure. Surely, then, it is highly important, that they should hope in God for the blessings which they need and which he only is able to bestow. Otherwise, it would have been good for themselves if they

had never been born.—It is now proposed,

III. To show that the young may hope in God for the blessings they need, it is necessary they should be instructed in religion. In all instances knowledge is necessary to the existence of holiness and happiness in rational beings. And that they who are in childhood and youth, may obtain the knowledge which is necessary to their hoping in God and receiving the blessings they need, they must be constantly and faithfully instructed in religion. For,

1. They will not be sensible that they need to receive these blessings from God without religious instruction. All mankind naturally possess a proud and selfish spirit. They are unwilling to see and feel their necessities and their entire dependance upon God for the blessings they need. And so long as they are ignorant and insensible of the favours they need from God, they will not look to him, nor set their hope in him. The young have little knowledge of themselves; or of the world in which they live. Nor will they know, unless they are taught, that they can safely depend upon nothing, but the favour of God, either for present or future happiness. Without religious instruction, they will set their hopes and their hearts upon the trifles of time and never raise their attention and their affections to their creator.—They will live and die under the influence of delusion and vanity,

unless they are taught to fear God and to hope in his mercy. For they will not be sensible, that they are guilty, needy and dependant creatures, unless they are shown their character and condition, as they are described in the holy scriptures. Without the plain and faithful instructions of religion, the young will be insensible of their necessities, and will never be induced to hope in God for the blessings they need.

2. That the young may see that they may safely hope in God for the blessings they need, they must be instructed in religion. Without such instruction they will be as ignorant and insensible of the divine fulness, as they will be of their own necessities. Unless they are taught the true knowledge of God, they will see no reason for hoping in him for any blessings. None can truly hope in God without a knowledge of his character. Both his natural and moral perfections unite in forming that foundation, which renders him worthy of the hope of his sinful, needy and dependant creatures. God has power to enable him, and goodness to dispose him, to bestow all needed favors upon those, who hope in his name. The power and the goodness of God, as they are manifest in the gospel, constitute the foundation for hoping in him. And the young should be taught what God is, and what he has said, and what he has done, and what he designs to do, that their hearts may be turned to him,

and that they may set their hope in him. In the character, conduct and designs of God, as they are described in the scriptures and displayed in the works of creation, and by the events of his providence, are to be found the reasons, that should induce the young in early life, to seek him as their portion and their hope. But without a correct and extensive knowledge of God, as the creator, preserver and governor of all things, they will see no reasons for hoping in him. And such knowledge the young will never obtain without religious instruction. For they will not see, unless they are taught, the reasons by which they should be lead to set their hope in God. Again,

3. Unless the young are instructed in religion, they will not see the duties they must perform in order to their having a good hope in God for needed blessings. Without that holy obedience to the divine commands, which God requires, no person can receive from him the blessings he offers. Yet many presume to hope in God for the blessings they need, while they conduct in such a manner as will bring upon themselves his wrath and curse. Holy obedience is necessary to the enjoyment of the divine favor. But such obedience can never exist without a knowledge of what God requires. The young must be taught to fear and obey God, before they can truly hope in his mercy. They will never do, unless they know ;

and they will never know, unless they are taught, the duties they are required to perform, in order to set their hope on God. Obedience to the divine requirements is inseparably connected with a good hope of divine favour. That the rising generation may so obey God, as to have a good hope in him, they must know what he requires, and that they may have this knowledge, they must have religious instruction.

IMPROVEMENT.

1. Since religious instruction is necessary to induce the young, to set their hope in God, we may see by what means the ancient people of God were so long the objects of his special favour. Other families, and nations, soon fell into the greatest errors, and the grossest wickedness. And from generation to generation, they were without hope, and without God in the world; but Israel enjoyed the gracious presence and special favour of God. During successive generations, for a long period, there were in Israel many persons, who were eminent for their knowledge, piety, usefulness and happiness. And that people were so distinguished by the favour of God, that he was "called the hope of Israel, and their Saviour in time of trouble." But by what means were that people, for so long a time, rendered proper objects of the special favour of God? It certainly was, chiefly, by means of

giving their children religious instruction. This duty, God enjoined upon the children of Israel, by the most urgent and powerful considerations. And this duty his pious friends and servants diligently and faithfully performed. Of Abraham God said, "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham, that which he hath spoken of him." From what is written in our context, it appears that God appointed the religious instruction of children, as the great means of maintaining the piety of his ancient people during successive generations. If the children of his ancient people had not been so instructed, they would never have set their hope in God, so as to have been, for so many generations, the proper objects of his special favour.

2. Since it is so important, that the young should be instructed in religion, they, who are truly pious, will be greatly concerned for their religious instruction. Pious persons know the situation of human beings, as they are born into the world. They know that they are "born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward;" and that they are "by nature, children of wrath." They also know, that it is highly important, that the young should, in early life, secure the favour of God. But this they will not do, without instruction in religion.

To every pious person, it is to be expected, that the early instruction and piety, of the rising generation, would be an object of peculiar attention and concern. Truly pious persons, have been deeply and tenderly concerned for the instruction of the young. Abraham, who was called the friend of God and the father of the faithful, gave his children and household religious instruction. Moses was very attentive and diligent, in giving religious instruction to the rising generation. Joshua and Samuel, were engaged in promoting the same important object. David, the pious and devout king of Israel, called upon the young to receive religious instruction. He said, "Come ye children, hearken unto me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord." Solomon, in his inspired writings, has a peculiar regard to young persons, and endeavours to fill their minds with the lessons of divine wisdom. The prophets were greatly concerned to promote the instruction and piety of children and youth. The Lord Jesus Christ showed a pleasing and affecting interest, even in respect to infants. And the Apostles, both in their preaching and in their writings, were attentive to the religious instruction of children. The same object has engaged the attention, and employed the exertions of pious persons, since the days of the Apostles. And since it is so important, that the young should set their hopes on God; and since for this purpose

they must have religious instruction; pious persons will always feel a deep and tender concern, for the religious instruction of the rising generation.

3. Since religious instruction is necessary to the piety of the rising generation, we may see how real religion, has generally been preserved, among the descendants of pious ancestors. It was so before the Saviour came into the world. For hundreds of years, through many generations, the true knowledge and worship of God, were preserved among the descendants of Abraham, and God has generally blessed the pious instructions and examples of parents and ancestors to the spiritual benefit of many of their descendants. The unfeigned faith, that was in Timothy, dwelt first in his grand-mother Lois, and his mother Eunice. Real piety has commonly been preserved from generation to generation in the same families. Such persons, as have been eminent for piety, in Europe and America, have almost always descended from pious parents. God appears to have fulfilled to pious parents this gracious promise—"I will pour my spirit upon thy seed and my blessing upon thy offspring." He seems also to have performed another important declaration:—"As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord; My Spirit that is upon thee and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth

of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever." From what God has said, and from what he has done, there is reason to expect and to believe, that he will, very commonly, bless the pious instructions of pious parents, to the saving benefit of their children. But we may almost as well expect, that religion will exist, where the gospel is not preached, as that it will exist in children, who are not favoured with religious instruction. It is, however, certain, that by means of religious instruction, real religion has generally been preserved among the descendants of pious ancestors.

4. Since religious instruction is necessary to the piety and happiness of the rising generation, the opinion, that it is not important to instruct children in religion, is very erroneous and dangerous.—Such an opinion is decidedly opposed to what God declares and requires in the scripture. It is also contrary to the instructions of reason and experience. Yet modern infidels have imbibed and labored to diffuse the opinion, that it is improper to give children religious instruction. A similar opinion is also maintained by some professed believers in christianity. There are professed christians, who by their profession and practice in many instances, oppose the duty of giving children religious instruction. They condemn what they call an attempt to make persons christians by education.—

They say—It is the Spirit of God, that makes persons pious. But the spirit of God, never makes persons pious, without 'religious instruction. And it is as proper to instruct children in religion, as it is to preach the gospel and to read the scriptures, that religious instruction may be obtained by other persons. Since religious instruction is necessary to the existence of piety, the religious education of the young is an important duty. And it is plainly enjoined upon parents by the apostles, as well as by the prophets. The opinion, that it is not highly important to give young persons religious instruction, is altogether erroneous and extremely dangerous.

5. Since it is necessary to the welfare of the young that they should be instructed in religion, irreligious parents take the direct method to ruin their children.—Such parents disregard religious instruction. And by their example they teach their children to forget, disobey and dishonor their holy Creator. Irreligious parents commonly give their children irreligious instruction. They teach their children not to set their hope in God. They often fill the minds of their children with error and strengthen their hearts in wickedness and folly. Such conduct is suited to lead young persons in the broad way to endless destruction. Parents can commonly do more to save, or to destroy their children than other persons. And

the example of irreligious parents is the most powerful means, that can be conceived, for effecting the ruin of their children.

6. If it be so important that children be instructed in religion and set their hope in God, then children should be carefully restrained from whatever may prevent the proper effects of religious instruction. Religious instruction may be easily counteracted and its proper design be defeated.—When the young are plainly taught the doctrines and duties of religion, they are naturally inclined to reject the truth and oppose or delay their duty. They should be carefully guarded and restrained from what is suited to prevent the proper influence and happy effects of instruction, when it is received and obeyed in early life. They should be guarded against an high opinion of themselves. Also against an high opinion of worldly objects.—Against wicked companions and sinful pleasures. If they be not restrained from these evils, they will be emboldened and hardened in error and wickedness.—They will become stubborn and rebellious; and they will refuse to fear God, to obey his commands and to hope in his mercy. Children and youth need to be guarded and restrained from error and sin as well as to be instructed in truth and duty.

7. Since it is of the highest importance for the young to set their hope in God, they, who have, in early life, placed their hope in

him, can never have reason to regret their conduct. Multitudes have had reason to regret the impiety and wickedness of their early days. Many however imagine, that religion requires too great a degree of self-denial, to be regarded in early life. But whatever is valuable is gained and secured by early piety; and nothing but what is evil and hateful is renounced and sacrificed. No one, that ever set his hope in God, while he was in the days of childhood and youth, ever had reason to repent and be sorry, that he had while young secured the favor of his Maker and Judge. On the contrary, early piety has been a source of comfort and joy in every period of human life. Obadiah said to Elijah—"I fear the Lord from my youth." And such a consideration he accounted his honor and his happiness; although he belonged to the court of Ahab, that wicked king of Israel. The Psalmist said, "Thou art my hope, O Lord God; thou art my trust from my youth." Many have set their hope in God, while they were young, and they did what was far wiser and better than other persons, who have wasted their early days in wickedness and vanity. Samuel did what was wiser and better than the conduct of Eli's sons.—David did better than Saul.—Moses did better than to have been called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and to have gained all the treasures of Egypt. It is better and wiser to choose to suffer affliction, with the

people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. They, who become pious, when they are young, do what is wisest and best and can never have the least reason to regret their conduct.

8. From the importance of early piety, there appears to be great reason to rejoice, in what is predicted respecting the piety of the young, during the future glory of the church on earth. The gospel, in its saving influence, has never had on earth, but a very limited and feeble effect, when compared with the extent and influence of error and wickedness. But the gospel, according to divine predictions, is yet to prevail among all nations, and all the families of the earth are to be subject to its holy and happy influence. Then children and youth in early life, will set their hope in God, and will be blessed with his salvation. How glorious and happy will be that day, when all shall know the Lord, from the greatest to the least! Then all parents will be truly pious, and will devote their children to God, in love and in faith. Then they will be diligent and faithful in performing their vows, and in the instruction and government of their children. Then God will pour his spirit upon the seed of his people, and his blessing upon their offspring. Then all nations will flow into the kingdom of the Redeemer, and the whole earth will be filled with the knowledge of God, even as the waters cover the sea. As all will then be truly

pious in early life, so they will become eminent for knowledge, for holiness and for happiness. Then "there shall be no more an infant of days, nor an old man, that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old." How lovely and how happy, will the rising generation then be among all nations, and in all families throughout the whole earth! In prospect of such glory, which believers may now behold by the light of divine truth, there is abundant reason for the highest and purest joy.

9. Since it is so highly important, that the young should receive religious instruction, and should set their hope in God, there is reason to be thankful, for what is now done for their instruction and piety. For nearly a century infidels have desired and laboured to turn the attention and the affections of the young, from the knowledge, the service and favor of God and the Lord Jesus Christ. They have wickedly, but vainly hoped, that they should bring the religion of the Bible into general contempt, and cause the name of the Saviour to be forgotten, or abhorred, where ever it had been known and loved. Multitudes, in christian nations, became in early life, corrupted and destroyed by their errors and delusions. But a new scene has opened upon the church and the world. God has awakened and encouraged his feeble and desponding people, to rise and exert themselves for the diffusion of

divine truth. And now designs are formed, and exertions are made for the instruction and salvation of all the nations and families of the earth. In this happy period, the eyes and the hearts of the pious are turned with peculiar attention and affection, to the rising generation. And unusual and successful exertions for their religious instruction, are extensively made at the present day. In Europe they have been made for a number of years. Lately they have been begun in this country. Vigorous exertions and liberal contributions have been made, to promote the religious instruction of children in this land. Missionary Societies and Bible Societies, will eventually, carry religious instruction to every nation, to every family and to every individual on the face of the whole earth. In view of what has already been done within a few years, for the instruction and piety of the rising generation, there is great reason to give praise to God, whose powerful and gracious hand has performed these works of mercy.

10. The subject calls upon all persons, to be concerned and engaged, for the religious instruction of children and youth. The professors of religion ought to consider, that they must soon leave the church on earth. And then the places, they have filled in the house of God, and at the table of the Lord, will be empty, unless they be filled by such persons as are now in early life. Should not

the professors of religion, then, be engaged and concerned to prepare the young, by having their hope set in God, to fill their places, when they shall be removed by death?

Must not religious parents, be exceedingly desirous, that their children may set their hope in God? And will they not be excited to be diligent and faithful, in giving their children religious instruction?

Will not such parents as are not religious, be deeply sensible that they are solemnly urged to turn to God, that they may, by their examples and by religious instructions, do what is desirable and important, for the spiritual and eternal welfare of their children?

And surely they, who are in early life, are urged by solemn and weighty motives, to remember their Creator in the days of their youth, and now to set their hope in God.

THE APOSTLE'S CONDEMNATION OF
FALSE TEACHERS.

No. V.

In view of the sentiments which have been illustrated in the preceding numbers, it is now proposed to offer several remarks on the subject, which has been under our consideration.

1. Since the apostle condemns all those, who embrace any scheme of religion, which is different from the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ,

it is evident that there is an infallible standard of orthodoxy. Many seem to imagine that the term, orthodoxy, has no proper and definite signification. They imagine it is perfectly vague; and has no foundation but in prejudice and caprice. They imagine that no man has a right to say, that he is orthodox and another heterodox. But the apostle had a definite and infallible standard of orthodoxy.—By this standard he judged respecting his own doctrines and sentiments and the doctrines and sentiments of all other persons. His standard was the gospel, or that scheme of religion, which God has revealed in the Bible. All, who embraced this scheme, he pronounced orthodox; and all, who embraced a different scheme he pronounced heterodox, and condemned and censured for their errors and their disbelief and rejection of the truth. The same standard still remains in all its clearness and strength. It has been illustrated and confirmed by the experience of pious persons in all ages; by the existence and preservation of the true church in the midst of numerous parties and sects; and by the enmity and delusions of heretics and errorists of every description. The infallible standard of orthodoxy was never more definite and evident than it is at the present day. This standard may be easily perceived and understood by every person, who does not love darkness rather than light, and choose

to involve himself in error and deceit. To pretend that the fundamental and essential doctrines of the gospel, which are the true and only standard of religious sentiments, cannot be understood and ascertained, amounts to a disbelief and denial of the value and use of the revelation which God has given us in the holy scriptures. “*The Bible, the Bible is the religion of the Protestants.*” It is the infallible and unchangeable standard by which the supreme and final Judge will pass his sentence of approbation or condemnation upon the sentiments, the affections, the character and conduct of every human being for eternity. The pure and holy gospel of the ever blessed God, which is revealed in the scriptures, and founded upon definite, immutable and everlasting principles, is the infallible standard of orthodoxy. And they who do not conform their faith and their practice to the Bible, whatever may be their prejudices, their sincerity, their confidence, their ignorance and their error, will be censured and condemned by the God of truth and of love, in the great and last day.

2. Since the apostle condemns all, who embrace any scheme of religion, which is contrary to the gospel, there is an infallible standard of catholicism. That charity which is not guided and guarded by truth, is blind, false and unwise. Truth is the standard of love as well as of faith. Orthodoxy respects the fundamental

principles and doctrines of religion; and so does christian charity. The professed and apparent charity and fellowship, which are, so prevalent and so popular at the present day among religious professors, who differ in respect to the fundamental, essential and peculiar doctrines of the gospel, are not genuine charity and christian fellowship. It is not the charity of Moses and the prophets, nor of Jesus Christ and the apostles, nor of saints and angels in heaven, nor of God. It is a blind and dangerous charity, which is suited to oppose and conceal the truth of God in respect to his holiness and glory, his eternal and universal purposes, and his most wise and holy agency, which extends to all creatures and all events, and indeed every doctrine and every duty of the gospel. Let religious professors and the professed teachers of divine truth, in their pretended catholicism, once unite in affection and communion without an honest, thorough and explicit profession of the fundamental doctrines of the gospel, and they will soon involve themselves in Egyptian darkness, and spread delusion, and wickedness, and ruin, as far as their catholicism extends.

3. Since the apostle censures and condemns all, who embrace any scheme of religion, which is contrary to the gospel, it is proper and important that every person should judge for himself, respecting religious subjects, according to the infallible standard, which

is contained in the Bible. Every person not only has a right, but is bound to understand, believe and love the doctrines, which God teaches. And it is highly important that every person should study and search the scriptures for himself and form a correct and thorough decision in respect to the great doctrines and duties of the gospel; that his "faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." Every person ought to be influenced by a supreme regard to God, and his authority, both in respect to faith and practice. No one ought, from a regard to human authority, to misunderstand, disbelieve, or disobey what God teaches and requires in the holy scriptures. It is proper and important that every one should know, from the word of God, what is the truth respecting God and the law, Jesus Christ and the gospel. No one deserves to be blamed for believing what God teaches, though it should not be believed by any other person. No one has a right to believe any thing, which is contrary to the scriptures; or to form a judgment on religious subjects, that does not agree with the infallible standard of truth and duty. The right of private judgment gives no person any liberty to judge wrong; or to disbelieve and reject the word of God, or any of its doctrines. But the right of private judgment gives a person perfect liberty and imposes an indispensable obligation upon all

persons to understand, believe, profess and maintain the fundamental, essential and peculiar doctrines of the gospel against all the prejudices, objections, unbelief and enmity of the world, that lieth in wickedness. Every person has a right, according to the infallible standard of divine truth, to believe the existence of God, his absolute perfection, his universal purposes and agency; the doctrine of the trinity, of election and reprobation, of the atonement by the death of Jesus Christ, of sanctification by the power and grace of the Holy Spirit, of the general judgment, of the endless rewards of heaven, and the endless punishment of the wicked in hell. No person deserves any censure, or reproach, or contempt, or abuse, for believing any doctrine, that God has taught in the Bible, however it may be disbelieved, opposed and hated in this world of ignorance, error and sin. Every one, who humbly and honestly studies and believes what God has taught in the scriptures, deserves to be approved and commended for his character and conduct. And they, who do not so study and believe what God teaches, will be condemned and punished for their stupidity, unbelief and hardness of heart. It was by the influence and authority of the Holy Spirit, that the apostle said—"Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which

we have preached unto you, let them be accursed."

APOLLOS.

ON LABOR-SAVING INVENTIONS :

A Letter to a Friend.

DEAR SIR.—Yours of ——— was duly received, detailing an account of your recent invention; on the success of which, you will accept my hearty congratulations. This age is indeed an era of inventions. Something new of the kind, is almost daily proposed, for the inspection and patronage of an inquisitive public. These inventions, you know, have extended to nearly every province of human exertion—to nearly every thing, which can exercise the thoughts, or employ the faculties, of men. The design of them, in general, is to *save labor*, and thus provide for the more easy accomplishment of the necessary business of life; and so far, as they are fitted to answer such a design, (and for ought I at present see, this may be the case with yours,) I am by no means disposed to question their utility.

It is to be lamented, however, that human inventions, have not been confined to their proper province—to the business and concerns of the *present life*. It is greatly to be lamented, that they should have obtruded themselves, into the inviolable sanctuary of *religion*. But such, my dear Sir, is the fact; and I the more readily

advert to it, because, near the conclusion of your letter, in describing the state of religion in your neighborhood, you mention the prevalence of certain new, and, as you justly think "dangerous and destructive doctrines," among several of your friends. The truth is, Sir, mankind are not satisfied, to travel that good *old* way to heaven, which God has opened, and revealed to us in his word; but are bent upon contriving shorter, broader, and in their views *better* ways. They have thought, that in this, as in other things, there might be a vast *saving of labor*; and that most of what they call the *drudgery* of getting to heaven, might be dispensed with.

As this subject is thus introduced, and is one, I acknowledge, in which I feel interested; you will allow me to bring it more particularly and distinctly before you.

At the very entrance of the old Scriptural way to heaven, is erected, what some have called the *wicket gate*, but what our Saviour denominates the *new birth*. "Except a man be *born again*, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "Marvel not, that I said unto you, *ye must be born again*." But of late, it has been discovered, and believed, that this narrow gate is but a nuisance. It is fitted only to perplex the traveller, and cause him a great deal of unnecessary trouble. In the systems of many, therefore, it has been discarded and removed. It is strongly urged, that there is no farther *need* of it.

It might have been necessary in former ages, when a great part of mankind were Jews and heathens; but in the present enlightened and virtuous age, it is a scandal to pretend, that men "must be *born again*," and become "*new creatures*," in order to see the kingdom of God.

The good old way to heaven, is a way of *penitence*. Those who truly walk in it have a sense of their *sins*; and experience a holy sorrow on account of them. They find their guilt a heavy burthen, under which they groan and plead for deliverance. They often individually exclaim, as they pass along to heaven, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this body of sin and death?"—But according to the newest, and most fashionable system of religion—the most recently invented mode of arriving at heaven; this penitence, and sighing, and sorrow, are unreasonable and unnecessary, and may very well be restrained. We have never sinned enough, to occasion much grief or distress. We may indeed be chargeable with some slight imperfections; but a slight and momentary regret, is all that will be required.

In the old way to heaven, travellers walk habitually by *faith*. They lean, not on themselves, but on the Lord. They trust, not in their own merits or strength, but in the mediation and merits of their Redeemer. Their faith lifts them comparatively above the

world: For it leads them to regard, not "those things which are seen and are temporal, but those which are unseen and eternal." Thus, while it disposes them to renounce their own righteousness, as a foundation of hope; it strengthens them to "*live holy, righteously, and godly*" *here below*. Of a faith, such as this, so humbling, and yet so purifying, those who pursue the newly invented paths to heaven, confessedly know nothing. These are taught to trust *in themselves*. The foundation of their hopes *is*, their own merits. They have too high notions of their own goodness, and regard it with too great satisfaction, to think of renouncing it, in the question of their salvation. They can well dispense with *faith*, therefore, in the old fashioned sense of it. It is in their view sufficient, to yield a mere assent to the truth of revelation, while they *live* after the course of this evil world.

The old scriptural mode of securing a title to heaven, is represented as a scene of spiritual *conflict*. The path is beset with numerous, malignant, and powerful enemies. Those who travel it are obliged to "wrestle, not with flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers; against the rulers of the darkness of this world; against spiritual wickedness in high places." Accordingly, they are required, by the old Directory, to "put on the whole armor of God;" to "fight the good fight of faith;" and thus, "lay hold on eternal

life." It is to such as *overcome*, and to such alone, that the promises are made.—But according, to the newly invented modes of arriving at heaven, this conflict and warfare are chiefly, if not totally, useless. Indeed, they are chiefly a mere *pretence*. The enemies to be contended with, are mostly imaginary. The *world* is not an enemy, but a friend. Its pursuits and gratifications, are not to be avoided, but rather indulged. The *fleshly appetites* are easily controlled, so far as it is necessary, that religion should control them. And as for the grand adversary and enemy of souls, his very *existence*, it has been discovered, is a fiction. There is no such being with whom we can contend, or from whom we have ought to suffer, or to fear. The christian armor may therefore be laid aside; and the warfare, about which so much has been written and said, is fairly at an end. The *real* enemies of pilgrims are found to be in a state of comparative peace; while the frightful products of their distempered fancies, by the new inventions, are effectually exploded.

The way to heaven, pointed out in the Scriptures, is known to be a *laborious* one. The Lord of the pilgrims, allows them no time to be idle. He has a great and constant work for them to accomplish. They have difficulties to remove, and various obstacles to surmount. They must exercise a strict examination, an unceasing watchfulness, a vigorous government over them-

selves. They must watch their thoughts, watch their hearts, and keep their lives from sin. They must continue instant in prayer, and must endeavour to walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. They must be ready also, for labors and sacrifices, for every good word and work, in respect to their fellow men. They are in short, not suffered to neglect any duty, however painful; but are required to be perfectly and constantly obedient. And they must *persevere*, in the ways of well doing. They must endure to the end, in order to be saved; and must continue faithful unto death, if they would receive the crown of life.—Now this burthen of service, is intolerable to many; and a principal design of the new inventions, seems to be to throw it off. The contrivers and abettors of them, mean to arrive at heaven in some easier way. By taking down all the hills, and raising the vallies, and removing crosses and impediments; they mean so to widen and improve the narrow way; that whether travellers sleep or wake, walk or rest, heaven will be sure. In this view, the *labor* of getting to heaven, in the good old way, pointed out in the Scriptures—the labor of watching, praying, examining and obeying—of keeping Sabbaths, and observing ordinances, and making benevolent exertions and sacrifices, seems all a needless, useless drudgery. They are in pursuit of a method, and think they

have discovered one, in which the yoke may be laid aside, and this wearisome labor and servitude of religion, entirely saved.

In regard to these new modes, of securing a title to heaven, it may be admitted, if you please, that, so far as religion is concerned, they *are* a saving of labour. They do away the necessity, not only of the labor of religion, but of religion itself. And it may be admitted farther, that they are much more conformable to the natural, depraved inclinations of men—to the natural course of this evil world, than the old fashioned religion of the Bible. Still, before they are adopted, and the immortal soul is ventured upon them; there are several questions, which, I think, every wise, considerate friend of yours, will wish to solve. One is, *do they actually lead to heaven?* With all their fair and flattering appearances, are they any thing better, than sections of the broad road, which leadeth downward to perdition? We are warned, you know, of “a way, which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof, are the ways of death;” are the new inventions of which we are speaking, any thing better than such a way? When we hear it asserted by the Saviour, that unless “a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God;” unless he repent, he must perish—unless he believe, he must be damned—unless he continue faithful unto death, he cannot inherit a crown of life; when we hear

such assertions, and from such a personage, who will dare to discard them, and venture his immortal interest upon systems, which really, if not confessedly, set them aside?

And farther, my dear Sir, if the new inventions of religion were safe—if they did infallibly conduct to heaven; do you believe they would be as *pleasant*, as those paths of duty, which are defined and opened in the scriptures? Is it as pleasant, do you think, to live in sin, as it is to repent of it and forsake it? Is it as pleasant serving Satan and the world, as it is to serve our God and Savior? Have the scriptures decided well, or not, that “there is no peace to the wicked,” and “the way of transgressors is hard; while the ways of holiness are “ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace?”

Religion, my dear friend, you will allow me to say, is a concern too great and solemn, to be trifled with. The immortal soul is of too much consequence, to be put at hazard upon slight or questionable grounds. When the issue, on either hand is nothing less, than an eternal heaven, or an eternal hell—an object infinitely glorious, or infinitely dreadful; surely we ought to ponder the path of our feet, and let all our ways be wisely established. And the more you ponder—the more carefully you reflect; the more, I am confident, you will be convinced, that there is but *one* way from earth to heav-

en, and this is that pointed out in the scriptures. It is the old way of *repentance, faith and new obedience*. It is that, in which the ancient worthies have walked, who through faith and patience, now inherit the promised rest. All other ways are a delusion. They lead directly down to death, and the steps of those that pursue them, take hold on hell.

You will have wisdom, I trust, to escape the snare that is laid for you. Cling to the *gospel*, as your only hope, and pursue that path of life, which it so plainly prescribes. This, you will find, is the way of duty, of safety, and of bliss. It will be your comfort here; and your joy for ever.

From one who loves you as a brother, P.

SUCCESS OF MISSIONS.

No. II.

Mission of the United Brethren.

This mission, has been distinguished, not less by the purity and disinterested perseverance of its missionaries, than by the success, which has attended their efforts. In the fore part of the eighteenth century, the Moravian Brethren became ardently desirous to promote the salvation of their fellow men, by making known to them the gospel of Jesus Christ. ‘When their number scarcely amounted to six hundred persons—when they had only just found rest from suffering themselves, from

the unrelenting cruelty of the Romish church, and were beginning to build a church and habitations, where there had previously been a desert, the missionary spirit was sent down upon them, with such constraining influence, that within eight or nine years, they had sent Missionaries to Greenland, to the Indians in North and South America, to many of the West India Islands, to Lapland, to Algiers, to Guinea, to the Cape of Good Hope, and to Ceylon. Their means were very small, but "they went forth, in the strength of their God, and he has wrought wonders for them."

Their missions have increased to thirty settlements, in which, about one hundred and fifty missionaries are employed, who have under their care, about twenty four thousand converts, from among various heathen tribes. Though small and feeble, when they began their missionary enterprise, they have put, and continued in operation, a system of measures, for the conversion of the heathen, more efficient, than almost all the attempts of the whole church, and world besides. Wilberforce describes them, as "a body of christians, who have perhaps, excelled all mankind, in solid and unequivocal proofs of the love of Christ, and of the most ardent, and active and patient zeal, in his service. It is a zeal, tempered with prudence, softened with meekness, soberly aiming at great ends, by the gradual operation of well adapted

means, supported by a courage which no danger can intimidate, and a quiet constancy, which no hardships can exhaust." Their missionary efforts have been very extensive, and their success shews, that the rudest barbarians may be civilized, by being christianized. "Wherever the Brethren," says Montgomery, "have preached the gospel among savages, they have introduced the arts of social life, and wherever the gospel has been received, those savages have become changed, not only in heart, and in conduct, but in personal appearance and intellect. Enlightened travellers, who have occasionally visited their remote settlements, have been struck with wonder, on beholding the comfortable habitations, the happy circumstances, the humble demeanor, and the fervent piety of the converts from paganism, whether Greenlanders, Esquimaux, North American Indians, Negroes, or Hottentots. And the governments of the colonies, where the missionaries have been stationed, have borne the most favorable testimony, to the benign influence of their labor, upon the state of society, in the neighborhood of their congregations."

The Moravian Brethren labored for a considerable time, without any apparent success, but the fruits of their zeal and perseverance in due time appeared. In the West Indies, there are now more than 20,000 negroes, joined to their congregations, and great

numbers have entered into eternal rest, steadfast in the faith of Christ. These congregations are increasing and multiplying, beyond the capacity of the churches to contain, and of the missionaries to superintend them. Nor were their efforts less successful in Greenland. Nearly the whole of the Greenland population, in the neighborhood of some of their settlements, has embraced the christian religion. The state of society is wonderfully changed, and instruction, through the medium of Danish and moravian teachers is as universal, as in any country. The moravian Missionaries went also among the Indians of North America, and many thousands of these roving and turbulent savages were converted from the error of their ways, and adorned the doctrine of God their Saviour, both in their lives, and by their deaths. They went also among the Hottentots, in the south of Africa, and though their first attempts, were attended with some disasters, yet they persevered, meeting dangers with boldness, and enduring suffering, with patience, until at length, they had the pleasure, to see their settlements, like the "garden of the Lord, in the midst of the wilderness,"—the Hottentots themselves, being as much changed in their habits, manners, and minds, as the face of the country has been improved by industry and skill. The love of Christ has subdued their natural character, and they have become tractable and mild in their dispositions

These missionaries have had to contend with every thing, which is "stupid in ignorance, and wayward in depravity." But their perseverance and success have surpassed all rational expectation. What they have accomplished, with their scanty means, seems almost incredible. But the truth is attested, by the facts themselves. Let him, who thinks nothing has been accomplished, by missionary efforts, consult the history of the moravian brethren, and unless he has a "hardihood of incredulity, or a strange talent, at misunderstanding plain facts," he must be convinced, that such efforts, accompanied with such success, would soon evangelize the world. Yea, had the rest of the protestant world, been equally active, and equally successful, the night of paganism would already have been past, and the sun of Righteousness would have illumined and reformed, and blessed the whole family of man.

Before we close this number, we will notice one circumstance, which is inseparably connected, with the success of these self-denying and devoted missionaries. The circumstance now alluded to, is the great change, which took place in the mode adopted, in their endeavors, to instruct the natives. The account is given as follows, by Montgomery, "The method pursued by them, for some time, consisted principally in speaking to the heathen, of the existence, the attributes and perfections of God, and enforcing obe-

dience to the divine law ; hoping by this means, gradually to prepare their minds, for the reception of the sublime, and more mysterious truths of the gospel. For five years, the missionaries had labored in this way, and could scarcely obtain a patient hearing, from the savages. Now therefore, they determined, in the literal sense of the words, to preach *Christ and Him Crucified*. No sooner did they declare unto the Greenlanders, the “word of reconciliation,” in its native simplicity, than they beheld its converting and saving power. This reached the hearts of their audience, and produced the most astonishing effects. An impression was made, which opened a way to their consciences, and illumined their understandings. They remained no longer, the stupid and brutish creatures, they once had been ; they felt they were sinners, and trembled at their danger ; they rejoiced in the Saviour, and were rendered capable of sublimer pleasures, than those arising from plenty of seals, and the low gratification of sensual appetites. A sure foundation, being thus laid, in the knowledge of a crucified Redeemer, the missionaries soon found, that this supplied the young converts, with a powerful motive to the abhorrence of sin, and the performance of every moral duty, towards God, and their neighbor ; taught them to live soberly, righteously and godly, in this present world ; animated them, with the

glorious hope of life and immortality ; and gave them the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, as the Creator, Preserver and moral Governor of the world, in a manner, far more correct and influential, than they could ever have obtained, had they persevered in their first mode of instruction. The missionaries themselves derived benefit from this new method of preaching.

The doctrines of the cross of Christ, warmed and enlivened their own souls, in so powerful a manner, that they could address the heathen, with uncommon liberty and fervor, and were often astonished at each other’s power of utterance. In short, the happiest results have attended this practice, not only at first and in Greenland, but in every other country, where the Brethren have since labored, for the conversion of the heathen.” W.

AN EXTRACT.

MESSRS. EDITORS,

If you think a knowledge of the following fact will be useful, you are at liberty to insert it in your Magazine. Perhaps some may think the method taken to open the eyes of a disbeliever, was improper ; but the event showed, that it had a deep effect, and was doubtless more impressive on a blinded mind, than any other

means, which could have been used.

Z.

This disbeliever of all religion shall be called *Perditus*, for the sake of secreting his family name. It is said, that in his early years, he had several seasons of seriousness, against which he continued to strive, until all sense of truth and duty to God, seemed to be obliterated from his mind.—After he became thus stupid, it was one of his most delightful themes, to ridicule his former sobriety and thoughtfulness, and he represented himself as having been ridiculous in the highest degree, to think so much of another state, and take pains to be happy, by rejecting the festivities of the world. By this manner of ridiculing himself, he was instrumental of corrupting a number, some of whom were reclaimed by his death, some remain in the stupidity of sin, and others have followed him into eternity. This man was generous, hospitable and festive in his natural disposition, which led to many opportunities, for discovering the impiety of his heart, and he never failed in any company, to express his contempt of Christ and his religion, and of pious persons. He ridiculed prayer—he spoke of death with levity—represented christian institutions as a farce—and professed to think that God was so highly exalted above all creatures, that he took little or no notice of their transactions. That God made men, that they might pursue their own pleasures;

and that he was pursuing his own pleasures, in a way suited to his own appetites, as he expressed himself. At no great distance there lived a clergyman, with whom *Perditus* took particular pains to become acquainted. He would often meet him affably in the streets, and insist on his visiting his house; but all this was done that he might gratify himself, with indirect insults and insinuations, against religion and sobriety. In sundry interviews, the Clergyman bore the sneers of *Perditus*, affecting not to perceive them, until he had obtained a thorough acquaintance with his heart. This being thoroughly obtained, the Clergyman requested *Perditus*, to spend with him a day in the solitary fields, with which he complied. When removed from all other eyes and in the solitude of a grove, the Clergyman acquainted *Perditus* with the object he had in view, which was to converse freely with him on the things of God, of religion and eternity. *Perditus*, little suspecting any thing of this kind, was for a few moments angry, but soon became calm and agreed to hear. The Clergyman then stated the manner of their acquaintance, and acknowledged perfect civility of treatment, in every respect, except the sneers which he had often thrown out against the truths, duties, institutions, ministers and professors of religion. That he had always seen and felt these things, though *Perditus* had supposed him igno-

rant and unfeeling under the most bitter reflections. That he had often affected this want of discernment, out of tenderness to the wife of Perditus, who was often present at their conversations. She believed in the reality of religion, although she was not pious. Perditus had ridiculed the Clergyman, in his own profane circle, as being a man who could not resent; but was now confounded, to find that his motives were tenderness to the feelings of his own family.

The Clergyman now proceeded to state before him, in the most solemn and affectionate manner, the great truths of religion; its natural and revealed evidence; his own character, neglects, impiety, and ingratitude to the Lord of all his bounties; and enforced these truths by the solemnities of death, judgment and the eternal world. The conversation was long—it was interesting. Perditus found that he had completely laid himself open to a man, on whom he had thought himself to be ludicrously playing. He was sometimes confounded and ashamed; sometimes for a moment angry; sometimes alarmed; and did at sometimes attempt to change the serious discourse into merriment. He was told, that unless there was a reformation from reflecting on religion and its institutions, there must be a total discontinuance of those social interviews, to which they had been accustomed. The result was, that Perditus engaged to call the next day, at the Cler-

gyman's house, and fix his resolutions.—He called as he had engaged. He acknowledged that he had not treated the Clergyman with the respect of politeness, promised to refrain in his presence from any future insinuations against religion, and desired him to visit his house as a friend and a gentleman; but at the same time avowed his utter disbelief of religion, of the word of God, and the sincerity of christian professors in general. On this being so freely owned, the minister again begged him to review, for that possibly he might yet obtain a conviction of the truth. To which he resolutely replied, “I wish your company as a man, but I charge you never to speak to me again on the subject of religion—yea more, never to pray for me unless I specially ask you,” and thus they parted.

It was not long after this before Perditus was smitten with a deep decline, and all spectators saw marks of approaching death on his visage. He struggled, but in vain, for a speedy confinement ensued. The Clergyman deliberating on the case, concluded to conduct as will be related.

He called often as a neighbor, conversed of his complaints, and endeavored by every means to assuage the pains of his body and console the afflicted family; but never said any thing of religion. These visits were daily made, but without any thing of a very serious nature. On a certain day,

the clergyman had barely returned home, before a messenger followed to recal him. He returned, when Perditus told him—"You kindly visit me, but say nothing of religion, why is this?" The answer was, you have forbidden me ever to speak to you on such subjects, I wait but your permission and religion shall in future be the subject of our discourse. To which he replied, "converse with me on the religion of nature, but not on christianity." The direction was followed, and the religion of nature was for several days the subject of discourse, without a word said of Jesus Christ or the peculiar doctrines of the gospel. Perditus still denied, that he or any other men were sinners. After a short season Perditus enquired, why do you not offer to pray with me, as you do with others who are sick. The former answer was given, you have forbid me, and I cannot do it until you make the request. I wish it, said Perditus. For what shall I pray, for any thing more, than that you may recover? To which he replied, that is the great thing at present. Prayer was several times made according to his direction, and confined to the matter of his recovery. After several passing days, Perditus said, "Why do you not pray with me as you do with other people?" The minister answered, in what respects do I differ? He answered, "you do not pray that God would forgive my sins." But you have always de-

nied that you were a sinner—I have prayed for you as a sinner in my closet, but if you spoke true, you could not sincerely join with me in praying for you as a sinner; I shall however gladly now do it if you feel yourself to be such. He assented that he did; but said that he did not see the need of a Savior, for if God was disposed to forgive, he might do it without. He was told that a christian minister could not pray to God to forgive sinners, in any other way than through the Savior, whom he had appointed. And was left in a state of great agitation. In subsequent visits, he strongly urged for prayer that God would forgive his sins without a mediator, but as this could not be granted, he seemed for a few days to determine that he would throw away all sense of his sinfulness. However, as the certainty of death was becoming more apparent, the struggle in his mind grew more terrible, and an accusing conscience denied him all peace. Two days before his death, he urgently sent for the minister, and requested prayer, that God would forgive him for the sake of Jesus Christ. He said that he saw God's displeasure against him to be so great, that none but a Savior of infinite power could deliver him from the ruin into which he was falling, and he now repeated the name of Christ, with as much urgency as he had before blasphemed him. At the time he was brought to this confession, a number of his

infidel companions were listening to his dying words. They confessed him to be in the full exercise of reason, and until now had triumphed in their looks, expecting that his death, would be an evidence for infidelity. But when they heard him supplicating for mercy in the name of Christ, the confusion of several was beyond description, and they quickly dispersed from the scene of distress. He confessed to the minister, that the manner he had taken of leaving all to his own conscience, and neither conversing or praying further than his own particular request, had awfully alarmed him, and it seemed to be continually sounded in his ears, my blood must and will be required at my own hands. Until the time of becoming insensible, he heard eagerly, but had no alleviations of distress. Thus he died and went to his long home, a monument of the folly of rejecting the gospel of Christ. What multitudes live in carelessness and disbelief and die in fear! They will not hear until it be too late. The pride of their hearts and their love of sin makes them reject even the gospel of grace, and they fall under the awful denunciation, "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsels, and would none of my reproof. I will also laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your

destruction as a whirlwind. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me."

Con. Exan. Mag.

Vermont University.—The College building of the Vermont University at Burlington took fire on the 27th of May, from a spark which fell upon the roof, and was burnt down. The college and society libraries, and part of the philosophical apparatus were preserved, together with most of the books and furniture of the students.

Alleghany College.—At the commencement of Alleghany college, Meadville, (Pa.) on the 7th inst. the degree of A. B. was conferred on one young gentleman, that of A. M. on four alumni. The honorary degree of A. M. was conferred on the Rev. George Weller, of Maryland, and that of M. D. on Stephen Brown, of New-york.

Ordinations and Installations.

On the 9th of May the Rev. Benjamin Woodbury was ordained over the First Congregational Church and Society in Falmouth. Sermon by Rev. Dr. Woods; of Andover, from 1 Cor. ix. 22.

On May 26, the Rev. Daniel G. Sprague was installed Pastor over the Church and Society in Hampton, Con. Sermon from Rev. xv. 2. 3, by Rev. Mr. Dow, of Thompson.

Installed at Hamilton, Rev. Joseph B. Felt, as pastor of the church and congregation in that town. Sermon by Rev. Mr. Gile, of Milton, from 2 Cor. iv. 10.

Ordained, June 30, the Rev. Ezra Stiles Gannett, as colleague Pastor with the Rev. Dr. Channing, over the church and Society in Federal street, Boston. Sermon by Rev. Dr. Channing.

THE
CHRISTIAN MAGAZINE.

VOL. I.

SEPTEMBER, 1824.

No. 9.

ORIGINAL COMMUNICATIONS.

SERMONS—No. VII.

THE PEACEFUL EFFECT OF CONFIDENCE IN GOD.

ISAIAH, XXVI. 3. *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee ; because he trusteth in thee.*

The ancient prophets were employed to bear the messages of God to his people. These messages were adapted to their peculiar circumstances. Sometimes they were designed to reprove them for their offences ; sometimes to admonish them of approaching danger ; and sometimes, to administer comfort and confidence under the dark and threatening aspects of divine providence. In the chapter which contains the text, the prophet administers matter of joy and faith, in a day of darkness and distress. The conclusion of the chapter discloses the occasion of the consolation in the beginning of it. These are the two last verses : “ Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee ;

hide thyself, as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For behold, the Lord cometh out of his place, to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity ; the earth also shall disclose her blood and shall no more cover her slain.” In such a time the prophet says, “ This song shall be sung in the land of Judah ; We have a strong city ; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks. Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation, which keepeth the truth, may enter in. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee ; because he trusteth in thee.” Here trusting in God and staying the mind upon him mean the same thing, and produce the same happy effect, which is perfect peace. The words of our text, then, place before us the following sentiment : *Entire confidence in God affords perfect peace.* To illustrate this sentiment it is proposed,

I. To show what entire confidence in God implies ; and,

II. To show that such confidence will produce perfect peace.

I. It is proposed to show, what entire confidence in God, implies. There is not any genuine confidence in God, which is not entire. But there may be a partial confidence in God, while there is no sincere trust in him. Those, who have no true love to the great governor of the world, may have some dependance upon him, in concurrence with secondary causes. They may expect, from a certain concurrence of circumstances, that he will preserve or deliver them from evil, or bestow upon them some desired favor. But genuine confidence in God is always entire and perfect, and not divided between the creature and creator. Such confidence in God implies,

1. A realizing belief of his existence. This is different from a speculative belief. There are multitudes, who believe in speculation, that there is an eternal, immutable, self-existent Being, who possesses absolute perfection; and yet they have no realizing sense of being in his hand and under his eye. Those, who stay themselves upon God, see him, who is invisible and realize his existence and presence as much as their own. They realize the intimate connection between themselves and their creator, in whom they live and move and have their being. They are sensible of their nearness to God and of his nearness to them. It is only when the mind thus realizes the existence of God, that it can stay itself upon him or confide in him. Men may

have many affections that are right, without having true confidence in God. They may feel right towards the objects which they see, while they have no affections towards the king eternal immortal, and invisible, whom they do not see. But when the heart is right and the mind filled with a sense of the divine presence, then real confidence in God will always exist. Confidence in God, like all other affections towards him, always implies a realizing sense of his actual existence and universal presence. It is not in the power of any person to realize the existence of the deity and yet conceive him to be at a distance. Nearness to God and confidence in him cannot be separated. It is true, that there may be a sense of nearness without confidence; but there cannot be real confidence without a sense of nearness. The mind as well as the body, requires a reality to rest upon. Job could not confide in God, while he could not realize his presence. He says he looked on his right hand and on his left, but could not find him. He attended to his operations and the place where he did work, but could not behold him. This prevented his confidence and increased his distress. But when his eye saw him, he could abase himself before him; and he could love and exalt God and trust in him. The soul must have a present, direct view of God, draw near to him, come into his presence and realise the existence of an infinitely great

and perfect Being, in order to rest upon him and confide in him.

2. Entire confidence in God implies a belief of his universal and perfect government. The belief that God exists and is omnipresent is not a sufficient foundation for confidence. Were it possible for God to exist without governing his creatures and his works, he would be a proper object of reverence, esteem and love. But he could not then be an object of confidence. A firm and realizing belief, that God holds the reins of government in his hand, is essential to entire confidence in him. And it is certainly the dictate of reason and scripture, that God is the great Governor of the universe. It is impossible to conceive, that he should delegate the power of government to any of his creatures. There is no hand, but that which made the universe, sufficiently powerful to govern it.— All created beings are equally, constantly and absolutely dependant. An angel is no more able to govern the universe than a man; and a man is no more able to do it, than a worm. The whole chain of created beings and created objects hangs suspended upon the omnipotent hand of God. He is, by nature and necessity the supreme ruler and disposer of all things in the whole circle of creation. And his government must be universal. It must extend to the smallest as well as the greatest objects. It must extend to the moral as well as the natural world. He must

govern the views and feelings, designs and actions of all moral beings. Accordingly the scripture represents God as governing the seasons, the winds and the waves, the creatures in the ocean, in the air and in the earth, and all the inhabitants of the world. The universality of the divine government is one of the plainest doctrines in the word of God. And so is the perfect rectitude of it. God is holy in all his ways and righteous in all his works. He has one uniform, consistent, important and benevolent object; and that is the highest holiness and happiness of the universe. He never withdraws his attention from this object for a single moment; nor does he in a single instance neglect to promote it. In all he does in heaven, in all he does on earth, and in all he does in the dark regions of hell, he aims to diffuse holiness and happiness among all his dutiful subjects in every part of his vast dominions. His wisdom enables him to know what is best; his goodness inclines him to choose it; and his power enables him to promote it. He employs all his creatures, and all his works to execute a scheme of goodness and of grace, which, when accomplished, will fill the minds of all holy creatures with gratitude and joy. His government has no imperfection attending it. It is neither unwise nor unkind, nor weak, but absolutely perfect. It is suited to the condition, the character, and circumstances of every created being.

Now, a realizing sense of this extent and perfection of the divine government is implied in an entire confidence in God. If it were possible to discover, or even to conceive, that God should be either unwise, or unjust, or unholy, or negligent in the administration of government, there would be no reasonable foundation for entire confidence in him. But if his government is universal in extent and perfect in rectitude, then there is a sufficient foundation for unbounded confidence in all his dispensations. There can be no reason to distrust infinite wisdom, power and rectitude. While these divine perfections are employed in the government of the universe, all its interests are perfectly secure. There is not the possibility, that either the whole, or any part of the intelligent creation should be injured; or be less happy than the infinite perfections of God should make it. And a belief of this truth is necessarily implied in entire confidence. But men may have a realising belief of the existence of God and the perfection of his government, without the least confidence in him. And therefore I must add,

3. That entire confidence in God further implies a cordial approbation of the divine government. None can confide in God, who do not choose that he should govern the universe in the best possible manner, whatever may become of their interests for time and eternity. Mankind are gener-

ally more afraid that God will govern well, than that he will govern ill. They are more afraid that he will do right than that he will do wrong. And when they are afraid of his doing right or of his doing wrong, they can have no confidence in him. Nothing but a truly benevolent spirit, which desires the highest good of the universe, can approve of the divine government, which will infallibly promote this most desirable and most important object. But when persons feel a benevolent spirit, and heartily desire the great object of the divine government, they must feel entire confidence in God. A realising belief that he is able and willing to do what is best, must produce unlimited confidence in all the dispensations of his providence. This belief, in connection with this approbation, must banish all distrust from the mind. It is utterly inconceivable that a man should believe the universal and perfect government of God and heartily approve of it, and yet entertain a distrust of the Judge of all the earth. While the mind realizes and the heart approves the perfection of the divine dispensations, the natural effect must be entire confidence in God. It is now proposed,

II. To show that entire confidence in God will afford perfect peace.

For this purpose it may be observed,

1. That they, who confide in God and stay themselves upon

him, see no absolute evil in the universe. For every creature, every object and every event is constantly and entirely under the divine direction; and under that direction must finally be an occasion of good. There is no natural or moral evil, which shall not finally praise God and promote the highest good of the universe. The desires, the designs and exertions of the wicked will be overruled for good. The criminal errors, defects, and imperfections of saints, shall finally subserve the great interests of the universe. And all the pains, distresses, calamities and punishments, which exist under the divine government, will be finally overbalanced by superior blessedness. There is not nor ever can be, any absolute evil in the universe. And they, who confide in God, realize this consoling truth and enjoy perfect peace. The mind that is stayed upon God, cannot discover, nor even conceive of any thing, to disturb it. All things are safe, amidst all the storms and tempests, which shake the world. For God is in the storms and directs them to the most desirable end, which is perfect peace. The friends of God, while they stay themselves upon him, can always say, "We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks." The eye of holy confidence always discerns perfect safety, which produces perfect peace. God has promised, and entire confidence believes that he will fulfil his pro-

mise, "that all things shall work together for good to them, that love him." And while those who love him, confide in his faithfulness, they see every thing calculated to do them good; and this must necessarily fill their minds with perfect peace. Such is the natural tendency of entire confidence in God. But on this subject we may appeal to the infallible evidence of fact. And this leads me to observe,

2. That entire confidence in God has produced perfect peace. A great number of God's creatures have stayed themselves upon him. All the angels in heaven have, from the beginning of the world to this day, entirely confided in God. They have never, in a single instance, distrusted the perfect government of the Deity, though they have been spectators of the most mysterious dispensations of his providence. They saw the rebellion in heaven, when Satan withdrew legions from their subjection to their Maker. At that time when there was war in heaven, and the city of the great king of the universe was attacked, his cordial subjects were kept in perfect peace, by their entire confidence in the power, wisdom and rectitude of his government. The same holy beings saw the apostacy of the human race, which had a most dark and threatening aspect upon the glory of God and the interests of his kingdom. But they did not fear any evil tidings from the new-made world, because their

hearts were fixed, trusting in God. There was perfect peace in heaven, while there was perfect despair on earth. In the course of the divine conduct towards mankind in succeeding ages, there have been times of great darkness and distress. When the old world was drowned; when Sodom and Gomorrah were burnt; when Israel were oppressed in Egypt; when Pharaoh and his hosts were destroyed; when the plagues broke out in the camp of Israel; when the surrounding nations united their counsels and their arms against Joshua; when ten tribes revolted from the God of Israel; when the two tribes were carried to Babylon; when Jerusalem was laid desolate; when the Messiah was slain by wicked hands; when the whole nation of the Jews were dispersed over the world; when the christian church was persecuted; when the man of sin arose; and since that time, when the whole world have been combined against the cause of Christ; the angels of heaven have been spectators; and yet they have constantly looked upon all these scenes in perfect peace. Their minds have never been disturbed by a single event since they came into existence. The only reason is, they have stayed themselves upon God. Their confidence has been entire and constant. And this is a demonstration, that perfect peace is the infallible consequence of perfect confidence.

But let us come to more familiar scenes. God has had some cordial friends among our rebellious race from age to age; and they have placed entire confidence in his wise and holy government, which has afforded them perfect peace, under the most dark and trying circumstances. Noah was perfect in his generation and confided in God, who kept him in perfect peace and safety, amidst a perishing world. Abraham, in all his changes and trials, trusted in God and was kept in perfect peace. Jacob confided in God when his brother Esau came to destroy him, and God kept him in perfect peace. When the camp of Israel rose in rebellion and refused to go forward to Canaan, Joshua confided in God, and perfect peace was the effect of his confidence. When Samuel delivered the awful message to Eli, he confided in God and enjoyed perfect peace under his holy dispensations. When David was driven from his throne and his kingdom, he confided in God, which gave him perfect peace. And when he lay upon his death-bed and was leaving the world, in which he felt deeply interested, entire confidence in God afforded him perfect peace. Hear his last words, "although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure; and this is all my salvation and all my desire." What entire confidence did Heze-

kiah place in God; and how did he possess his soul in peace! He said "Good is the word of the Lord," though it threatened the most wasting judgments. The bereaved Shunamite placed entire confidence in God and enjoyed the happy effect of it. When she was asked "Is it well with thee? Is it well with thy husband? is it well with the child?" She answered—*It is well.*" She enjoyed perfect peace, because she stayed herself upon God. The prophet Habakkuk in a time of great calamity said—"Though the fig tree should not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vine; the labor of the olive shall fail and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." He placed entire confidence in God, which afforded him perfect peace of mind. When Paul's friends tried to dissuade him from going to Jerusalem and placed the dangers before him in the most lively and affecting colours, he replied, "What, mean ye to weep and break my heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." And our Lord himself trusted in God, and found perfect peace. When his tremendous sufferings approached him, he cheerfully said to his Father, in whom he confided, "Not my will, but thine be done." In a word, all good men

have always found that entire confidence in God has afforded perfect peace. Their peace has always been in proportion to their confidence in the Lord Jehovah, in whom there is everlasting strength.

IMPROVEMENT.

1. If entire confidence in God affords perfect peace, then saints would enjoy *constant* as well as *perfect* peace, if they did not withdraw their confidence in God. Their want of peace always arises from their want of confidence. For there is in God the same foundation for peace at all times, that there is at any time. And their peace must always be as perfect as their confidence. It is certainly a very great error ever to withdraw their confidence from God in any degree. But this error their spiritual enemies constantly tempt saints to commit. The opinions, the pursuits, the practices and the enjoyments of this evil and faithless world press like a strong and violent current against the faith and peace of saints, to turn their hearts from God. Satan, the father of lies, employs all his art, power and malice against their faith. If he can only withdraw their confidence from God, he can easily disturb their minds and destroy their peace. And contrary to reason, to conscience, to scripture and experience, saints do often withdraw their confidence from God, on whom they ought to trust forever, with all their hearts. As soon as

they depart from God through an evil heart of unbelief, all light, joy, hope and peace depart from their minds. And when saints withdraw their confidence from God, they are often, if not always more restless and unhappy than sinners, who have never experienced the comfort and peace, which arise from staying the mind upon God. Present faith in God is necessary to present peace ; and constant faith to constant peace. If saints would always maintain entire confidence in God, their peace would be as perfect and as constant as the power, goodness, wisdom and faithfulness of God, in whom they trust.

2. Since entire confidence in God affords perfect peace, the darkness and gloominess, to which saints are subject, are not owing to their religion, but to their want of it. It must be acknowledged, that real saints are liable to darkness and gloominess ; and to greater darkness and gloominess than any other persons. Their darkness and distress of mind, when their hearts turn from God, are as great as the light, the comfort and joy they have found by trusting in him. Hence the most eminent saints have sunk into the greatest darkness and trouble of mind, when they have withdrawn their hearts from God through unbelief. Jacob was involved in total darkness, and expected nothing but sorrow, when Joseph and Benjamin were taken from him.— Though Elijah had such great

courage and boldness at one time in the service of God, yet he fled with great fear and distress when Jezebel threatened his life. From the psalms of David it appears that his darkness, and distress, and fear, sometimes overwhelmed his spirit. He says—“ As with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me ; while they say daily unto me, Where is thy God ?” Job was no less afflicted with darkness and distress under his numerous and heavy calamities. Jeremiah accounted his life a burden, and his office a curse under his severe trials. But all their darkness, distress and complaints were owing to want of confidence. When they renewed their confidence, their peace was restored, and they were filled with hope and joy through faith in God. While saints place entire confidence in God, they leave themselves and the universe with comfort and joy in his hands ; and have no desire that any object or event should be different from what God has determined it shall be. But when their faith declines and fails, all their cares and burdens roll back upon themselves, and they find nothing but darkness, distress, weakness and fear. Yet the return of their confidence removes these evils, and restores perfect peace to their minds, as certainly as light excludes darkness, or strength removes weakness. Real religion stays the mind upon God and fills the heart with love, hope, joy and peace. The inconstancy and im-

perfection of true saints in respect to confidence and holiness are as great as the inconstancy and imperfection of their spiritual consolations and enjoyments. It is not religion but the want of it, that renders saints unhappy, gloomy and dark in their minds.

3. Since entire confidence in God affords perfect peace, they, whose hearts have been sanctified, have experienced a great, happy and sensible change. The heart of every human being is, by nature, deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. Nothing but darkness, error, and delusion pleases such a heart. All the objects, to which sinners look, and in which they trust, are perfect vanity and deceit. In all their hopes, designs, exertions and enjoyments, they experience disappointment and perplexity. Their unhappiness and misery arise entirely from the withdrawment of their affections from God. And there is in the universe no other object, in which they can trust with any safety or peace. But when the hearts of sinners are renewed, and they receive the love of the truth through the power and grace of the Holy Spirit, they then turn to God with all their hearts, and they trust in him with entire confidence. They then find rest to their souls and enjoy perfect peace. They are at peace with God; with his holiness, justice, goodness, truth and grace.— They are at peace with the decrees of God; and rejoice that he

has, in his eternal purpose according to the counsel of his own will, for his own glory, fore-ordained whatsoever comes to pass. They are at peace with the conduct of God; and are pleased that he turns, and moves, and governs the universe by his own wise, holy and sovereign agency, and works all things after the counsel of his own will. They are at peace with the law of God and delight in its holy commands, and submit to its dreadful penalty with perfect approbation and complacence. They are at peace with the prince of peace; they see his majesty and meekness, his glory and beauty, his truth and grace; and they love him, for his own excellence, with supreme, ardent and joyful affection. They are at peace with the children of God and bind themselves to the true church by the strong and tender bonds of truth and love. They are at peace with themselves.— And they are at peace with all things. In this state of perfect peace, true converts are kept, so long as their minds are stayed upon God. Such is the great, happy and sensible change, which exists in every person whose heart is renewed by the Holy Spirit, and who turns to God with holy confidence. Confidence in God is one of the first exercises of a new heart. And such confidence always affords perfect peace.

4. If confidence in God is necessary to perfect peace, then the time will come when all sinners

will be entirely destitute of peace. Sinners generally say, peace and safety unto themselves. They wickedly and vainly flatter themselves, that they shall have peace, though they walk in the way of their own hearts. But the way of peace they have not known. And when the darkness and delusion, in which they now choose to walk, shall be removed, and they shall be awakened from their stupidity, they will see and feel that they are opposed to God and his decrees and his conduct, his law, and his gospel. And they will find, when they are removed from this state of trial, that the things of their peace are for ever hidden from their eyes; and that no joy nor peace, nor hope can ever for a moment arise in their hearts.— They will find that there never can be a single object, or event, or prospect in the universe, that can afford the least comfort, or relief to their minds. Every thing in God and his law, in Jesus Christ and the gospel, in heaven and in hell, in their fellow-creatures and themselves, will fill their minds with darkness and despair.

5. Since entire confidence in God affords perfect peace, the time will come when all saints shall enjoy perfect happiness.— Under all their trials, changes, and sorrows in this life, their confidence increases. And when removed from this world of darkness and delusion, their faith will be constant. Their hearts will nev-

er for a moment turn from God with the least dissatisfaction, despondence, or distrust. Their knowledge, their love, their faith, their peace and their joy will continue and increase for ever and ever. As they shall review the wonders of divine power, wisdom, and goodness from the morning of the creation until the final judgment and shall see the greatness, the glory and beauty of God, as they will be displayed in heaven and hell for ever, their hearts will be enlarged with holy confidence in him. In the universe they will never perceive a single object or event, that can destroy or disturb their confidence for a moment. But all things will serve to enlarge and strengthen their confidence in their holy and blessed creator. With their faith, their love, their peace, their joy and their praise will increase for ever and ever. “I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.”

A STRANGE THING.

Messrs. Editors,

I find by conversation with my neighbours, and from the perusal of books and pamphlets which they are frequently putting into my hands, that there is an opinion extensively prevalent that all mankind will be saved. Those with

whose views I am best acquainted, generally believe that there is no punishment after death. Sin, it is thought, involves its own punishment. Consequently when mankind cease to sin, as it is supposed they all will at death, there will be an end to all their sufferings. This opinion appears to me *strange*, not because it is entirely new, but because it is inconsistent with so many other things which I have long considered as facts, and which so far as I know, have been considered as facts by others. It appears to me *strange*, because it places almost every thing connected with it, in a new and singular attitude. It is not my object, in the present communication, directly to attack this opinion, but only to show my readers how *strange* it appears, when considered in connexion with certain truths and facts, which are generally, if not universally acknowledged. I shall here make nothing of the fact that the primitive Fathers of the Church did not believe this opinion, that the voice of antiquity is decidedly against it, that the truly pious of every age have considered it of a peculiarly dangerous tendency, that individuals of abandoned lives make it a refuge to shelter themselves from the fear of deserved punishment, that it is often embraced with little reflection, and given up when the near approach of death disposes the mind to a serious consideration of what the scriptures reveal respecting futurity. Although I firm-

ly believe, that there is something in these facts, which justifies a strong presumption against the opinion, and which cannot be candidly considered by its warmest advocates without serious misgivings; yet I choose not, in this place, to insist upon any thing which they present, as an argument against it. But there are facts, to which I would turn the attention of my readers, which appear to me unaccountable, upon the supposition that the doctrine of universal salvation is taught in the gospel.

The *first* of these is the *solicitude*, which the Apostles manifested for the salvation of their hearers. They conversed and preached, and prayed, and laboured, as though they were deeply concerned for the salvation of their fellow-men. Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans, expresses the anxiety which he felt for his brethren the Jews. "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish myself accursed from Christ, for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." In the first verse of the next chapter, he gives us the reason why he was so anxious respecting his brethren. "My heart's desire, and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be *saved*." That the salvation of his hearers was the object of Paul's exertions, as well as prayers, is more than intimated in

the following passage. "I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means *save* some." Paul was anxious, not only so to conduct *himself* as to secure the salvation of his fellow creatures, but that *all* to whom the treasures of the gospel were committed, should do the same. This is apparent from the following address to Timothy. "Take heed unto thyself and unto thy doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt both *save* thyself and them that hear thee." Now upon the supposition, that Paul, and the rest of the Apostles, knew that all would be saved, it appears to me *strange*, that they should manifest this *solicitude* about it. It is not natural for mankind to be anxious that an event should take place, when they know infallibly, that it cannot be prevented. We see no one anxious lest the sun should not continue to rise and set, and the seasons observe their appointed successions. And the only conceivable reason is, all men are satisfied that the rising and setting of the sun, and the rotation of the seasons will continue as they have done. Now if Paul knew, and if it is a truth he did unquestionably know it, that all men would be saved, he could not have had any anxiety respecting the salvation of his brethren or any one else, any more than those who know the sun will rise to-morrow, can be anxious lest they be left in total darkness. Paul's anxiety respecting the salvation

of his brethren and others, and the great exertions which he made, and endeavoured to influence others to make in order to save them, are strange and unaccountable things, upon every other supposition, but that of his considering them in danger of perishing, and his seriously fearing that many of them actually would perish.

2. If the doctrine of universal salvation was taught by the Apostles, it appears to me strange, that their hearers were so much *alarmed* at their preaching. That the preaching of the Apostles did excite great alarm and anxiety among their hearers, is a fact with which few can be unacquainted. On the day of Pentecost three thousand were pricked at their heart upon the hearing of Peter's sermon; and under the influence of their deep anxiety, they exclaimed, "Men and Brethren, what shall we do." It seems to have been a conviction of his guilty perishing condition, produced by the doctrine of Paul, that influenced the Jailor to inquire, what he should do to be saved. When Paul stood before Felix the Roman Governor, and "reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix *trembled*." Now if the Apostles believed the doctrine of universal salvation, they were doubtless understood to preach it. But it appears to me *strange*, that their hearers, while listening to the cheering truth that all will be saved, or to what evidently implied this, should *tremble*, give

signs of the deepest distress, and with tears entreat the apostles to inform them what they must do to be saved. Their deep solicitude is perfectly *natural*, upon the supposition that they were taught the reality of a future judgment, and the danger in which they stood of perishing forever, as a just punishment for their sins. We can easily see that a firm belief in this truth, and a lively apprehension of it, would produce the very trembling and alarm, and inquiry which were produced. But as the opinion under consideration is inconsistent with their having been taught any such thing, it renders the fact of their deep anxiety wholly unaccountable. To get rid of the difficulty, we will for the present suppose, that they were *needlessly* alarmed, as many are occasionally thought to be at the present day.

3. Admitting the fact that Christ and the Apostles taught the doctrine of universal salvation, it appears to me inexpressibly strange, that their hearers manifested so much *opposition* to their preaching. Christ and the Apostles doubtless preached the truth plainly and faithfully. Of course, if the doctrine of universal salvation is true, they preached this doctrine,—they were understood to preach it, and they never preached any thing inconsistent with it. Now what there is in this doctrine so repugnant to the feelings of the human heart, as to excite such opposition as Christ and the Apostles

encountered from the world, I never could see. That the feelings of all men in an unsanctified state are opposed to the doctrine of future and eternal punishment, is a truth which every one knows from his own experience, as well as from observation. On the supposition that Christ and his Apostles preached *this* doctrine, it would be perfectly easy to account for all the opposition which was made against them. But why all the world, as it were, should rise up against these holy men, and persecute them even unto death, only for declaring the glad tidings of the salvation of all men, is one of those unaccountable things which I acknowledge myself unable to explain.

4. Upon the supposition that all will be saved, there is something peculiarly strange in the language, in which Christ and the Apostles speak of the future state of the righteous and the wicked. With the idea in his mind, that it was the design of Christ and the Apostles to teach the certain salvation of all men, let the reader consider for a moment a few of their expressions, and see if there is not something peculiarly *strange* in them. “Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” In Luke, “Fear him which after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea say unto you fear him.” It is not a little surprising that Christ,

who upon the principle here assumed, wished to guard his hearers against any apprehensions of a punishment beyond this life, should here speak of God's being able to destroy the *soul*, as well as the body; to destroy the soul in *hell*, after he had killed the body.

Besides, I cannot see the conclusiveness of our Saviour's reasoning in this place. What if God is *able* to destroy the *soul*, as well as the body? This is no good reason why we should fear *him*, rather than any other being, if it is known that he *will* not do it. What if God is *able* to destroy the soul in *hell*? If it is known that there is no such place of future punishment as hell, and if God is so good that he will not destroy the soul in hell, I do not see why the circumstance that he is *able* to do it, need to frighten us. I doubt not Christ did reason conclusively. But in this case I cannot see the force of his argument, unless he meant to teach the dreadful doctrine, that the souls of the wicked will go to hell, as a place of punishment after the de-
 cease of their bodies.

"Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat; because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Now as Christ believed in the doctrine of universal salvation, I should suppose, that instead of *exhorting* his hearers to enter in at the strait gate, he would

have told them that they *would* enter in at the strait gate; that instead of using the alarming expression, "Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat," he would have told them honestly that there is no way to destruction, and of course that none are going there; that instead of saying, very nearly in the style of the illiberal partialists of the present day, "strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life and few there be that find it," he would have adopted the more catholic language of another class, and without hesitation declared, that the gate of Heaven is *wide*, that the way thither is *broad*, and that *all* will find it.

"Marvel not at this, the hour cometh in which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice and come forth, they that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation." Should I hear a preacher at the present day use such an expression as this, without any explanation, I should naturally conclude that he believed, not only in the future resurrection of the bodies of all the dead, but of the subsequent happiness of the righteous, and misery of the wicked. This, I cannot doubt, is the conclusion of ninety nine in a hundred, the first time they hear the expression. It is truly astonishing then, that Christ who is supposed to have known

that these doctrines are totally false, and extremely pernicious, should have used such an expression. Not one in fifty of those who now preach universal salvation, would, if it presumed, have the imprudence to drop this expression, or any one similar to it, without at the same time so explaining it, as to prepare his audience to receive a meaning essentially different from the most obvious sense of the words.

In his explanation of the parable of the tares and the wheat, Christ says "the field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be at the end of the world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity. And shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." When I consider that this is an *explanation* of a parable which Christ had previously spoken; an attempt to make more *plain* to them, what he had left in comparative obscurity, I have no words to express the astonishment which I feel at his language. In-

stead of finding the doctrine of universal salvation plainly and unequivocally taught, as we might expect, if Christ believed it himself, from such a parable as this, we find here a *distinction* made between the children of the kingdom and the children of the wicked one, an assertion that those who do iniquity, shall be gathered out of the kingdom of God, and cast into a lake of fire, and an intimation that the *righteous* only shall shine forth in the kingdom of their Father. How much more like a universalist would Christ have spoken, and if he meant to intimate that all would be saved, how much more generally, as well as easily would he have been understood, if he had been silent respecting a *distinction* between the children of the kingdom, and the children of the wicked one, and called them all the children of God. And, instead of dooming a part to a lake of fire, as is frequently done in the pulpits of those now termed bigoted ecclesiastics, he had said, not that the *righteous* shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father, but that *all the human race* "shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." Christ *was* honest and sincere, plain and faithful in his instructions. But *how* he could be so, and use such language as is found in the explanation of this parable, while he believed that all would be saved, is certainly among the mysteries which are not yet understood.

“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory; and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand and the goats on the left. Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart, ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.” Now if the opinion, that there is to be a day of judgment at which all the human race will be summoned before Christ, the righteous separated from the wicked, the one received to endless happiness, and the other consigned to ceaseless perdition, be groundless, it is to me peculiarly *strange*, that Christ, who must have known the falsehood of this doctrine, should give so much occasion for the belief of it, as he does when he speaks of all nations’ being gathered before him, of his separating the righteous from the wicked as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats, of his inviting the one to the enjoyment of that kingdom prepared for them by his Father, and of his bidding the other de-

part accursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. If he did not believe this doctrines, it is certainly natural to suppose, that he would have been more cautious, than to use language which seems unequivocally to express it. That thousands of honest inquirers after truth, have understood him to assert this doctrine in the passage before us, is what few, if any will pretend to deny; and that he knew they would thus understand him is as generally acknowledged. It appears to me *strange*, therefore, that he had not used expressions that would have clearly conveyed his meaning, and prevented the numerous distressing fears, as well as hurtful errors which his language has occasioned. Let my readers consider, that Christ *knew* the truth upon this subject, that he was able to express it with the greatest plainness, that he had no intention of frightening them by false exaggerated representations, but that his real object was to communicate the most important practical information; and then let them tell me, how he came to use language which so much resembles that of those, who preach the gloomy doctrine of future and everlasting punishment.

The conduct of the apostles, upon this subject, appears to me equally strange with that of Christ. Considering them as Universalists, designing to teach that there will be no punishment after this life, I am wholly unable to reconcile

their expressions with truth and sincerity. Paul's language to the Corinthians, upon the future condition of mankind, very nearly resembles the language of those who preach in opposition to the Universalists, the doctrine of future punishment. "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every man may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done whether it be good or bad. If Paul believed that there is no judgment after death, and no punishment only what is suffered in this life, it is very difficult, to say the least, to tell what he meant by our receiving at the judgement the things done in our *bodies*. Nor does there appear to be any propriety in his intimating, as he appears to do in the following passage that mankind go to judgment *after* death. "It is appointed unto men once to die, and *after* this the judgment. An Universalist might, perhaps, in consequence of finding such expressions in the scriptures make use of them in his public discourses. But if he were a man of prudence, he would carefully guard the minds of his hearers against a misunderstanding of them by his own explanations. When, therefore, I find Paul freely using such expressions and accompanying them with no explanations that seem in the least to detract from their most obvious sense, I am compelled to conclude that he was a very imprudent preacher, or, that he was no Universalist.

I have often heard serious and worthy ministers of the gospel, unhappily tinged, however with the belief of future and eternal punishment, censured for preaching too much terror. And there certainly has been, at times, some things in their awful denunciation against sinners, which were enough to make the stoutest heart tremble. But what has surprised me more than any thing else relative to this subject, is the part that Paul, and others of the apostles, use expressions upon this subject as strong, and as full of terror, as any thing which ever dropped from their lips. I never heard the most offensive of these preachers say any thing which appeared to me more unequivocally to assert the doctrine of future and eternal punishment, more indicative of God's displeasure with the wicked, or better calculated to frighten them, than the following language of Paul. "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. It is possible that in the Apostles days, people were not quite so particular in regard to the language used, as they are in these days of increased light and refinement. But one thing must be obvious to all, should an Universalist preacher now

make a free use of such expressions of the Apostles as that above quoted, without accompanying them with his own interpretations, his hearers would conclude that he had changed his sentiments.— These remarks may lead my readers to conclude that Paul was more careless, or imprudent in his language than the rest of the apostles. But I am far from thinking that this is a fact. Although I dislike to charge him or any of his brethren with imprudence or insincerity; yet upon the supposition that they believed in the salvation of all men, I say again, I cannot reconcile their language with their sentiments, or with any serious intention of communicating them.— We will now suppose that John was an Universalist, and at the same time, consider for a moment, the language which he uses in relating a vision which he had of future things. “I saw a great white throne and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heavens fled away. And I saw the dead small and great stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened which was the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them, and they were judged every man according to their works. And

death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”— Here I cannot refrain from remarking that it is a *strange* thing, that John, who, as we have supposed, was perfectly free from any apprehension of a judgment after death, should have had just such a vision as this. And admitting, as we must, that he did have it, it is unaccountable that he should not have had the prudence to express himself a little differently, or to add some explanation to his words, which would have satisfied every honest reader, that he did not mean *all* which he seems to say. If he had told us, expressly, that he did not mean by what he had said respecting the dead small and great standing before God, to intimate that any of the human race would ever be raised from the dead; that he did not design, by the book's being opened and the dead's being judged out of the things written in the books, to be understood that any would hereafter be called to an account for what they had done in this life; and that by his declaration, “Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire,” he had not the most distant thought of alarming any one with the fear of future punishment, although it would then have been impossible, upon any fair principles of interpretation, to ascertain

what he did mean by his expressions, yet he might have appeared honest and sincere, and prudent. But to leave his expressions in the unguarded form in which they now stand, looks like a species of imprudence directly calculated to lead honest, sincere and even discerning minds into the gloomy belief of a day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men; a species of imprudence which we are sure would destroy the popularity, and essentially injure the cause of any Universalist at the present day, and of which, I speak to their credit, none of this class, within my knowledge, is ever guilty.

5. If there is no punishment after death, there appears to me to be something strange, in God's treatment of his creatures in this world. Generally speaking, the righteous and the wicked are here treated essentially alike.—Although there are instances, in which God does by his providence, inflict signal punishments upon the wicked, and confer signal rewards upon the righteous in this life; yet these instances being comparatively rare, must be considered among the *extraordinary* events of his providence. God's general rule of dealing with his creatures in this life, a rule from which he never departs, except in extraordinary cases, and for special purposes, is expressed in the following words: "He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." Solomon seems

to have been convinced, that as a general rule, God treats the righteous and the wicked alike in this world. "All things, he says, come alike unto all; there is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked." In another place, he says, "there is a vanity done upon the earth; that there be just men, unto whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked; again there be wicked men to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous." Now if it is a fact, as is unequivocally asserted in these words, that rewards and punishments are not always distributed in this life according to the deserts of men, it is *strange* to me, that there should not be a *future* retribution. To my mind, there is no truth more indisputable than this: the goodness of God must lead him, sooner or later, to treat all his creatures according to their characters.

Besides, upon the principle that all will be immediately happy after death, there is often something *strange*, even in those instances in which God *makes* a distinction between the righteous and the wicked in this world. Whenever the judgments of God upon the wicked are such as to carry them out of the world, they must, for ought I can see, become blessings, as in such cases, they are always instrumental of removing the subjects of them from this world to heaven. Now the flood, which has uniformly been considered as a judgment upon those who per-

ished in its waters, must, upon the principle here assumed, be considered as a judgment upon Noah, and a blessing to those who were destroyed! Reader, look at this subject one moment. Those who perished, all went immediately to heaven, where they were made perfectly happy in the enjoyment of God; while Noah, after having witnessed the agonies of a dying world, and enduring the sorrows of this seemingly dreadful catastrophe for forty days and forty nights, was left an afflicted, solitary individual, with no society but his own family, and no possessions but the ruins of his ark. To this solitary pilgrimage he was driven, for no other reason than for being a good man, while the true cause of his companions' all being received so soon to heaven was, they had corrupted their way before the Lord! A similar reason must be assigned why Lot, deprived of his wife, and dispossessed of his inheritance, was obliged to linger out a pitiable existence in the little city, Zoar, while the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, after one momentary pang, from the devouring element in which they were enveloped, were all received to the mansions of bliss; and why Moses was required to endure the labors, and hardships, and self-denial of a journey through the wilderness, and to hear, for the space of forty years, the murmurs and reproaches of a rebellious people, while Pharaoh and his hosts, who malicious-

ly pursued him, all safely entered the rest prepared for the people of God, the moment they were overwhelmed in the red sea. This is the strange attitude in which the opinion under consideration presents all the judgments of God, which have ever swept the wicked from the earth. So far from having been evils to them who suffered them, they appear to have been blessings!

On the whole, I cannot but think it *strange*, that a doctrine, attended with so many strange things, should be thought to be true. There must be something strange in the structure of that mind, or in the feelings of which it is the subject, which can believe this doctrine, in the face of so much plain testimony, and in opposition to so many well-known facts. The mind which can believe this doctrine in opposition to the scriptural facts, and scriptural testimony which present themselves against it, cannot be prevented, by *scripture*, from believing any thing which it wishes to be true. Do you ask, reader, what is the reason, why so many readily receive the false and absurd doctrine which has now been considered. In the following scripture, you have an answer.—“Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.”

A.

LIBERTY AND NECESSITY.

[We insert the following, with a desire and expectation that some of our Correspondents will consider and answer some parts of it, which may be viewed as objectionable.]

The great difficulty in the way of coming to satisfactory and harmonious conclusions in our reasonings on moral subjects, is, that the same word has different shades of thought associated with it in different minds. The idea of *liberty* in one man's mind, is that of freedom from all external influence whatever, while in the mind of another, it is only that of power to choose, refuse, and act accordingly, under the various kinds of influence to which he may be subject. So the notion of *necessity*, as it exists in the mind of the man who has formed all his ideas of it from what he has seen of the operation of mechanical powers, is very unlike what it would have been, if he had been a thorough going scholar in the philosophy of Dr. Brown. Hence it is that men often contend until their passions rise to almost open war, when in fact their opinions are not at all discordant. When the philosopher comes to use the word necessity, on moral subjects, the mechanic at once dissents from him, and refuses any longer to give him audience. And why is this?—Not because their sentiments are at variance, but because one receives a wrong idea from the language which the other uses,—an idea which he would himself reject with equal abhorrence. And yet, instead of

entering into such an explanation as would enable each fully to apprehend the other's views, they enter the lists of controversy, gird on their armour, and rush to battle.

So it has been, in a great degree, with the controversialists respecting *liberty* and *necessity*. There is little room to doubt, that they have often contended for *names*, rather than *things*,—that if each could have justly apprehended the other's views, difference would have ceased at once. What the libertarian contends for, is that the mind acts *perfectly free*; that *it is free to follow its own choice*, without any external influence to interfere with its thus acting. But what does he mean, when he says the mind acts perfectly free, that it acts as it chooses, and without constraint, follows its choice? There is one thing, and it would seem as if there were only one, that he can mean; that when two objects come within the mind's view, it prefers one to the other, and then not by constraint, but of its own pleasure, pursues that which it prefers, or follows its own choice. But why did the mind *choose* between the two objects, why did it not *come to a balance* between them? Simply because, in the mind's apprehension at the moment of making the choice, there was a feeling or notion of disparity between them,—a feeling that they were not alike desirable. I will ask again, why the mind made the choice it did; why was not the other object preferred?—Simply because, at the

moment of making the choice, there was in the mind not only a notion of disparity, but a feeling that the object which in the end was chosen, was more desirable than the other. And will the advocate for liberty feel any misgiving here? Will he deny that where the mind chooses between two objects, it chooses on the ground of a notion that the objects are not alike desirable? He will not, surely, if he will listen a moment to the testimony of his own consciousness. And if he will look into his mind's history he will find, not only that the fact of making a choice resulted from the notion of disparity, but that his choice fixed on the object it did, because the disparity was in favor of that object, and not because he willed to fix it there. He may trace back the history of his mental operations ever so far, and he will find uniformly that he has never chosen one thing in preference to another, except on the ground that the thing chosen appeared more desirable than the other; and that when there was this appearance, and apprehension, choice always succeeded. Is it not a fair inference then, that this apprehension of preference always will be followed by an actual choice of the object to which it refers? So the necessitarian concludes.—He looks at the history of the human mind, and in the manner in which these facts have taken place, he sees an unvarying uniformity. He now proceeds on the

ground of this uniformity in the past, to predict it of the future. His assertion is, that of several objects which the mind contemplates, that which appears more desirable will be chosen. This he affirms is absolutely *certain*; and here is all he means by necessity. The apprehension that one object is more desirable than another always precedes the act of choosing, and never fails of fixing the choice on the more desirable object: No matter how the fact of this antecedence and consequence is accounted for. Whether it depends on the constitution of mind, on the immediate will of God, or something distinct from either, is wholly foreign to the subject. It ever has been a fact, and the conclusion is, that it will ever continue such;—that the *cause*, or *principle* which has produced it hitherto, will continue to produce it,—call this cause, *necessity*, or *liberty*, or whatever else you please.

I will now make a few remarks in regard to the distinction of *natural* and *moral* necessity, and the ground of that distinction. In order to avoid misconception, I will express the relation of cause and effect, or antecedent and consequent, by the term *connexion*, instead of necessity. Not because the word necessity, when properly explained, is wholly unsuitable, but because it does not so well express the common notions of this relation; and more particularly, because there is always danger of losing sight of a formal definition,

and yielding to the influence of those notions which we generally associate with the word in common usage.

What, then, is the distinction, between that connexion of causes and effects, or antecedents and consequents, which may be called *natural*, and that which may be called *moral*? The connexion between the application of a spark to powder, and the consequent explosion of the powder, is obviously a *natural* or physical connexion. That between presenting to my mind an object adapted to awaken an affection of my heart, and the actual calling up of that affection, is no less obviously a *moral* connexion. The effect produced, in one case, is of a moral character, in the other it is not; and this is a sufficient reason for distinguishing the connexion in one case from that in the other.

Here, two questions may be asked. Are the effects in the two cases equally certain?—And how comes it to pass that in one case the effect is of a moral nature, and in the other is not?

In regard to the comparative certainty, I reply, that, "*cæteris paribus*," or every thing concerned in the two cases being alike prepared to act in its proper character, the certainty is the same; and if any prefer the language, so is the necessity. It is certain that the application of fire to powder *properly prepared*, will produce explosion. It is no less certain that the presentation of the character

of God to an intelligent mind alike in its *proper state*, will awaken an affection of holy love. It is as *certain*, and if any choose, it is as *necessary*. But what is meant by necessity? What is the necessity of the explosion in the case of the powder? We know not. There is one thing which we do know; there is an absolute certainty. But of a necessity which lies at the foundation of this certainty, we have no distinct notion. All is fancy and imagination. These remarks are alike true of either case, so that in either case the connexion as to certainty or necessity, is precisely the same.

Here, then, comes up the second question, viz. how comes it to pass that the effect is of a moral nature, in one case, and in the other is not? To this question the answer is most easy. The ground of the distinction is simply the fact, that in one case there is a *feeling* that the effect is *right* or *wrong*, and in the other there is not. There is in one case a feeling that the effect is or is not as it should be; in the other case there is no such feeling. Now if any one ask, how this feeling comes to exist in one case, and how it lays the foundation for praise or blame;—I answer by asking how it comes to pass that this feeling does not exist in the other case, and how the absence of it precludes all possibility of praise or blame;—and one question is as proper and rational as the other, and admits of as appropriate an answer. The truth is, both

questions relate to *ultimate facts*, which depend solely on divine appointment, and come not within the province of human investigation.

TENNET.

SUCCESS OF MISSIONS.

No. III.

Mission at Serampore.—This mission was commenced in the year 1793 by Mr. Thomas, a pious Surgeon and the Rev. Mr. Carey. Mr. Thomas had spent some time in India, and knowing their degraded condition, was desirous to do something for their relief. Under the patronage of the English Baptist Missionary Society, they sailed for Calcutta in June, 1793. The scene of their labours was among a vast population, whose cruel rites and debasing superstitions were truly shocking. There was every thing in the state of Hindoostan to discourage the missionary. Their rivetted belief in the antiquity of their own religious institutions, the extent and monstrous absurdity of their mythology, their superstitious reverence for the Gods, the Priests, the Sacred Books, and a thousand other consecrated objects, render them utterly averse to any new view of religion. Their extended system of polytheism, their law of Cast, forbidding all intercourse between different tribes, their numerous dialects, and many other obstacles found in the character and institu-

tions of the Hindoos, seemed to render the prospects of the missionaries almost hopeless. To the introduction of a system of theology, far less imposing and less congenial to their feelings, against the reverence they held for their own institutions fostered by every early association, and the long antiquity they claim for them, there was a difficulty of a most formidable nature. In the words of the lamented Ward—"Did ever any cause appear more hopeless? I well recollect this was the exact feeling when I arrived at Bengal. Every where we were advised to go back. Even some good men thought the attempt utterly impracticable." Having all these difficulties to contend with, immediate success could not be expected. A considerable time must be allowed for the missionaries to learn the language, to establish their character and acquire the confidence of the natives." "At the close of the seventh year," says one of the missionaries, "not one native appeared on the side of Christ, not one respecting whom we could indulge the least hope, that he was under christian impressions." Soon after that time they began to see the fruit of their labours. Our design does not require, neither will our limits permit us to enter into particular detail. If we take only a glance at the present missionary stations and the circumstances attending them, we shall see a pleasing contrast be-

tween the present and the former state and prospects of Hindoostan. For the last twenty years the mission has been making a gradual but steady progress. It has now nine stations in *Bengal*, several in the *upper provinces*, and three in the *Islands of the Indian Ocean*. The number of converts to the christian faith has been very considerable. More than a *thousand* persons have been initiated into the christian profession, and more than *six hundred* of these were formerly idolators or Mahometans. About *fifty* heathen converts are qualified for, and engaged in, superintending stations, and a number of the converted Hindoos have died happy in the faith of Christ, some of them leaving cheering evidence that they have gone to reap the rewards of the faithful. So many missionary stations in the heart of the Pagan world, and so many hundred Hindoos who have renounced Cast from their conviction of the truth of Christianity, are the most solid proofs of success that can be given.

If we now consider the other favourable changes that have taken place within twenty years, we shall see that many of the grand obstacles to christianizing India, are removed. The opposition of government has ceased, and authorities are now decidedly friendly to the mental and moral improvement of the natives, affording the most important aid to the missionary establishments. Institutions designed to facilitate the

progress of missionary operations have been established and multiplied. The following Societies have been formed :—The Calcutta Auxiliary Bible Society, which has published several versions of the scriptures in the Asiatic languages :—There are also Auxiliary Bible Societies in Madras, Bombay, Columba, Soomatra, Malacca, the Isle of France, Penang, Batavia and other places.—The School-Book Society, the object of which is to furnish schools and the natives generally with books :—The School Society, for the extension of schools among the natives :—Two Missionary Societies have been formed at Calcutta, and some funds raised in India for their support.

Other institutions have been reared by christian charity and by the common blessing of God, will ere long send forth the pure waters of life to fertilize the whole surrounding country. A college for Arabic literature, and the Calcutta Free School, and other Schools are in successful operation, and not less than 20,000 heathen children are now under instruction in India.

The missionaries have also established a College at Serampore, to which the heathen youth, from various parts of India, are flocking to receive the benefits of a liberal education.

By the instrumentality of the Bible Societies, five years ago, the Bible had been translated, in whole or in part, into *forty-four* different

languages. In that of Bengal and Orissa, spoken on a moderate estimate by about thirty millions of people, the whole Bible is printed and extensively circulated.

Now in view of these facts, have we not substantial proof of the reality of success? When we consider that already more than a thousand Hindoos have been converted to the christian faith, that there are so many missionary stations, so many societies and institutions whose object is to facilitate the means of instruction, so many bibles making their way through the empire of Satan,—that translations are daily advancing,—that education is extending its operations in the most rapid manner,—and that converts from these heathen are almost daily added to the christian church; are we not taught that the most formidable difficulties are already removed, and that this grand apparatus will soon effect a moral revolution throughout all British India? Christian villages, composed wholly of native converts have already been contemplated, and every thing indicates the approach of a vast change in this spiritual wilderness. In view of what has already been accomplished, and of what is in operation, the christian may anticipate the final triumph of christianity in India, and rejoice in the prospect, that “her wilderness will soon be like Eden and her desert like the garden of the Lord.”

But, notwithstanding these facts which are so cheering to the friends of missions, it has been asserted that “no success has attended this mission.” Just at the time when the christian world had learned by the testimony of indubitable facts that the missionary cause in India was progressing with unexpected rapidity, we hear it said, “this mission has proved unsuccessful.” The Christian Disciple, after having assumed as a fact, that, this mission had exerted no favorable influence upon the character and condition of the Hindoos, find the cause to be the idolatrous character of the religion of the missionaries. “The cause” to use the words of the Disciple, “of the disappointment of missionary endeavors, we conceive to be deeper than in any want of support for the undertaking, or of ability in the agents. We apprehend that there exists an insurmountable obstacle to the success of missionary operations in India in the character of the systems which have been offered to support the old Idolatry. The Hindoo religion is a religion of mystery and imagination. When overthrown it will not be by *another faith of the same character*, but by a faith *founded upon evidence and not opposed to reason*. Pure and not orthodox christianity is the system which will evangelize India.” And again this work says, “It is one of the weighty reasons why we wish and pray that the various systems of ortho-

doxy may be supplanted by a purer faith, *that they present the great obstacle to the diffusion of christianity over the world.*" It does not come within our own province at this time to notice the *liberality* of the above remarks. From the facts already mentioned, it will be perceived that both the premises and conclusions are wholly gratuitous. We do not say that the liberal belief would not spread *more* rapidly. Perhaps it would. But it would still remain a question whether the cause were not to be found in the circumstance, that it had so little in it to distinguish it from natural religion,—or that it does not inculcate a morality so rigid and pure, and so averse to all the corrupt propensities of the Hindoos. They would probably have less objection to embracing a system of christianity which would allow them to retain Cast, and some other of their absurdities. Our limits will not permit us to enlarge upon this subject. We can only express our regret that the editors of this *liberal* work should gratuitously assert that no success has attended this mission, for the apparent purpose of building upon it an argument against the orthodox system. We say *apparent* purpose, for we would not charge them with intentional misrepresentation. The orthodox system they consider as "the great obstacle to the diffusion of christianity over the world." We have no disposition to form any invidious comparisons.

But as the orthodox system has been considered "the great obstacle to the progress of missionary efforts and success, we may here ask, of what class of christians have been the missionaries to the heathen in this and other countries, in the present and past ages? Who are they that have imbibed a missionary spirit and have sacrificed all the endearments of kindred and home, to wear out their lives in an inhospitable clime and among an idolatrous people, for the purpose of bringing them to a knowledge of Christ? Who are they that are now beginning to feel their obligations to send the gospel to the heathen? Who are engaged in concert for prayer in behalf of the heathen? Whence this marshalling of so many forces and this furnishing of so many treasures? Whence so many missionary stations in heathen lands, and so many already brought to a knowledge of the christian religion? Which system of faith produces the greatest degree of pity and compassion for the heathen, and which is now facilitating the progress of christianity in so many parts of the world? Is that system of belief which has done all this to be accounted the grand obstacle to the diffusion of christianity?

But notwithstanding all that has been expended, and done, and suffered in this good cause, they who have been engaged in it are charged with the want of success, and this is attributed to their system

of belief. But it will be seen from the facts already referred to, and more fully from facts we shall hereafter notice, that the charge is unfounded, and the inference of consequence untrue. Every man who will bestow proper attention on this subject in examining the authentic missionary documents, will perceive that this, as well as other missions, has been attended with great success. This success was not immediate, and it was not expected. Nor do we claim perfection for the missionaries. ‘In a work of such magnitude, in which so many parts are to be fitly joined together, there doubtless may have been many errors committed by those who had every thing to learn by experience. And it would be most unreasonable to expect that the whole plan should go into magnificent operation without embarrassment, and the many millions of India be converted with-

out delay. We have seen from well attested fact that as much has been accomplished, as could reasonably have been expected. God has approved the work and bestowed his blessing. If facts are to test the truth and efficacy of the system, that system which has accomplished so much is entitled to our confidence and belief. We close this number by referring the reader again to a fact connected with the mission of the united Brethren. While they preached only the *morality* of the gospel they had no success. But no sooner did they preach “*Jesus Christ and him crucified,*” declaring unto the Greenlanders the word of reconciliation in its native simplicity, than they beheld its converting and saving power. This reached the hearts of their audience, and produced the most astonishing and happy effects.”

W.

EXTRACTS.

Memoirs of Mrs. H——, who closed a life of exemplary piety with Christian comfort and resignation.

Early in life she was a subject of serious impressions, obtained a hope in Christ, and made a profession of religion. She was far from being confident and assured when speaking of the exercises of her mind; but gave good evidence to others that her hope was well

founded. Her life appeared to be that of a pious, prayerful, humble and exemplary christian. In the management of the concerns of her family she was discreet and prudent. The heart of her husband safely trusted in her. To her children she was a tender and affectionate parent, a pious and able counsellor.

Such was the general character she exhibited in life; but the

principle design of this sketch is to describe some of the leading exercises of her mind during her last sickness. In the first stage of her illness, having little hope of recovery, she was greatly tried with the thought of leaving the children, who were most of them in that period of life when most exposed to be deceived and led astray by the allurements, amusements and vanities of the world. She found it difficult to bring her mind to a willingness to part with them, and commit them wholly to God. This inordinate anxiety, and want of confidence in the great disposer of all things she greatly lamented. It seemed to be the chief source of her trouble. She did not wish the clergyman of the society, when he called to visit her, to pray for her life, but that she might be entirely resigned to the divine will. This resignation she soon obtained in a very considerable degree ; and said that she was willing to give all up, to commit herself, her children, and all her concerns into the hands of God. To preserve and establish her mind in this patient, resigned and submissive frame, she would frequently reflect upon the sufferings of Christ, to which he cheerfully submitted in our stead, and mention the impropriety and inexcusableness of our complaints under trials and sufferings comparatively small, and which fall so far below our desert.

At times the love of God seemed to be remarkably shed abroad

in her soul. Her heart was filled with such raptures of joy as overcame the fears of death, disarmed the king of terrors, and rendered him lovely in her sight, as a messenger of peace. With such views she several times expressed herself to the minister, as he called to visit her, in nearly the following words. As he came to the side of the the bed, on which she lay, expecting hourly to depart, she took him by the hand, and in a cheerful voice, and with joy impressed on her countenance, said, "How sweet death is. It is pleasant as the morning, sweet as the honey and honey comb, to go to my dear Redeemer." Seasons of social prayer were exceedingly precious in her sight ; and on such occasions she appeared remarkably fervent and devout. Her joy was at times like that described by the Apostle, "Whom having not seen ye love. In whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

She uniformly manifested a thorough conviction and feeling sense of her entire unworthiness, and ascribed all the good, which she experienced, or hoped for, to the free grace of God, through the merits of the Redeemer. To her husband and friends bewailing her expected death, she addressed the words of Christ, "Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children." The salvation of souls and the prosperity of religion lay near her heart. She

urged it upon her family and others to make religion their chief pursuit. This she enforced by her words, but more powerfully by her example. Her peace and comfort of mind continued to the last.—Having finished her course she fell asleep in Jesus, and as we trust is gone to her Saviour, in whom she so much delighted.

In scripture, much is said respecting the pleasures of religion, and its consolations in times of trial. When we see such declarations exemplified, the power, the joys and the supports of religion felt and evidenced, we are led more fully to believe in the divine promises, and more feelingly to realize the excellency of religion.—When we see persons, languishing on a bed of sickness, under a lively sense of the near approach of death, of their own characters as guilty and ill-deserving, and of the perfect holiness and justice of God, experience inexpressible joy in contemplating the divine character, and through faith in Christ triumph over death and the grave; the righteous must feel their faith strengthened, and be enabled more fervently to praise and adore their glorious Redeemer who is thus mighty to save. Sinners also at such times are constrained to pay an involuntary tribute to religion, and to join with Balaam in saying, “Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.”

PHILO.

THE BIBLE.

An affecting and remarkable Tale.

The circumstance itself occurred in the town of Warrington, and was related there at a Bible meeting, by a gentleman of respectability and veracity, connected with the society.

The circumstance was introduced in the following words:—About three weeks ago, two little boys, decently clothed, the eldest appearing about thirteen, and the younger eleven, called at the lodging house for vagrants, in this town for a night's lodging;—the keeper of the house, very properly, took them to the Vagrant's office to be examined; and if proper objects to be relieved. The account they gave of themselves was extremely affecting, and no doubt was entertained of its truth.—It appeared that but a few weeks had elapsed since these poor little wanderers had resided with their parents in London. The typhus fever however, in one day, carried off both father and mother, leaving them orphans, in a wide world without a home and without friends! Immediately after the last mournful tribute had been paid to their parents' memory, having an uncle in Liverpool, poor and destitute as they were, they resolved to go and throw themselves upon his protection. Tired, therefore and faint, they arrived in this town on their way. Two bundles con-

tained their little all. In the youngest boy's was found, neatly covered, and carefully preserved, a *Bible*. The keeper of the lodging house, addressing the little boy, said, 'you have neither money nor meat, will you sell me this bible? I will give you five shillings for it.' 'No:' exclaimed he, (the tears rolling down his youthful cheeks,) 'I'll starve first.' He then said, 'there are plenty of books to be bought besides this; why do you love this bible so much? He replied, 'no book has stood my friend so much as my bible.' 'Why, what has your bible done for you?' said he. He answered—'When I was a little boy about seven years of age, I became a Sunday Scholar, in London; through the kind attention of my master, I soon learned to read my bible—this bible, young as I was, showed me that I was a sinner, and a great one too; it also pointed me to a Savior; and I thank God that I have found mercy at the hands of Christ, and I am not ashamed to confess him before the world.'

To try him still farther, six shillings was then offered him for the bible. 'No,' said he, 'for it has been my support all the way from London;—hungry and weary, often have I sat down by the way side to read my bible, and have found refreshment from it.' Thus did he experience the consolation of the Psalmist, when he said, 'In the multitude of the sorrows that I had in my heart, thy comforts

had refreshed my soul.' He was then asked—'What will you do when you get to Liverpool, should your uncle refuse to take you in?' The reply may excite a blush in many established christians. 'My bible tells me,' said he, 'when my father and mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up.' The man could go no farther, tears choked his utterance, and they both wept together. They had in their pockets, tickets, as rewards for their good conduct, from the school to which they belonged, and thankfulness and humility were visible in all their deportment.

At night these two little orphans bending their knees by the side of their bed committed themselves to the care of their heavenly Father—to him whose ears are open to the prayers of the poor and destitute; and to him who has said, 'Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.' The next morning, these refreshed little wanderers arose early, dressed themselves for their journey, and set out for the town of Liverpool; and may he who hears the ravens when they cry, hear and answer their petitions, guide them through time, and bless them in eternity.

London Evan. Mag.

COLLEGE RECORD.

Union College—The commencement of Union College, at Schenectady was held on the 4th ultimo. The degree of A. B. was conferred on 79 young gen-

flemen, alumni of the institution, and that of A. M. on 17.

The degree of D. D. was conferred on the Rev. William Rafferty, Principal of St. John's College, Maryland, Rev. Lucius Bowles, Fellow of Brown University, R. I. Rev. Ernest Harzelius, Hartwick, N. Y.

The degree of LL. D. was conferred on Mr. John Griscom, Chemical Professor, N. Y.

The honorary degree of A. M. was conferred on the Rev. Lewis Leonard, of Albany, Rev. Samuel Luckey, of New-Haven, Conn. Rev. Mr. Prentiss, of Athens, N. Y. Rev. William A. Clark, of New-York.

Columbia College—The annual commencement of Columbia College was celebrated on the 3d ultimo, at Trinity Church. The degree of Bachelor of Arts was conferred on 23 young gentlemen.

The degree of Master of Arts was conferred on 6 gentlemen, Alumni of Columbia College.

The honorary degree of Master of Arts was conferred on the Rev. Levi S. Ives, Rev. William A. Clark, James Cooper, James K. Paulding, and Samuel Cowdry, Esq.

The degree of Doctor of Laws was conferred on Thomas Addis Emmet, of New-York city, Langdon Cheves, of Philadelphia, and Daniel Webster of Boston; and the degree of D. D. on the Rev. Mr. Harzelius, Principal of the Hartwick institution, Otsego county.

Transylvania University—The commencement at Transylvania University, in the state of Kentucky, took place on Wednesday the 14th of July. The degree of Bachelor of Arts was conferred on 24 young gentlemen; that of Bachelor of Laws on 10; that of Doctor of Medicine on forty six. The whole number of degrees conferred at this University, from its establishment to this day, is 337. The degree of Doctor of Laws, also, was conferred at the late commencement, on J. J. Crittenden, of Kentucky, and Edward Livingston, of Louisiana.

At the late commencement of the University of Pennsylvania, 14 young gentlemen were admitted to the degree of A. B. and 34 to that of A. M. The degree of D. D. was conferred on the Rev. Henry A. Mulenburg.

The annual Commencement exercises at Harvard University took place on

Wednesday. The number who received the degree of A. B. was 65. The degree of A. M. was conferred on a large number of Alumni. The honorary degree of LL. D. was conferred on the Hon. Wm. Wirt, the Hon. Josiah Quincy, and the Hon. Daniel Webster.—The honorary degree of D. D. was conferred on the Rev. Bazaleel Howard of Springfield, Rev. John Andrews, of Newburyport, and Rev. Joseph Tuckerman, of Chelsea.

Dartmouth College Commencement.—The commencement at Hanover was attended on Wednesday the 25th August, by an unusual number of strangers and gentlemen of distinction. The degree of Bachelor of Arts was conferred on 28 young gentlemen, and that of Master of Arts on 13 alumni of the college, and four other gentlemen were admitted to the degree of Doctor of Medicine.

The degree of D. D. was conferred on the Rev. Theophilus Packard, and the Rev. David Kellogg, and that of Doctor of Laws on the Hon. Joseph Story.

ORDINATIONS.

At a special meeting of the Association of the Western district of the County of New Haven, held in the City of New Haven, Aug. 17th and 18th, Mr. BENJAMIN CHASE received ordination as an Evangelist. Sermon by the Rev. Dr. Spring, of New-York, on the divine institution of the Christian Ministry, the object, and the way in which that object may be secured, from Acts xxvi. 16, 17, 18.

At Newburyport, Rev. William Ford, as colleague pastor with Rev. John Giles, in the 2d Presbyterian church. Sermon by the Rev. Wm. Jenks, of Boston.

At Chester, Vt. as an Evangelist in the congregational connexion, Rev. Uzziah C. Burnap. Sermon from 1 Tim. 3. 1, by Rev. J. Bates, D. D. Prest. of Mid. College.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Theophilus and F. will probably appear in our next number. Communications from Carver shall receive due attention.

THE
CHRISTIAN MAGAZINE.

VOL. I.

OCTOBER, 1824.

No. 10.

ORIGINAL COMMUNICATIONS.

THE DOCTRINES OF DIVINE REVELATION HARMONIZE WITH EVENTS IN DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

PSALM, XVIII. 30. *As for God his way is perfect.* PSALM XIX. 7. *The law of the Lord is perfect.*

The "way" of God refers to his providence. To say that his way is perfect, is to justify his government, his providential dispensations.

The "law" of the Lord includes the system of Revelation, the scheme of mercy exhibited in the sacred oracles. This revelation is perfect. Nothing can be added, nothing taken away without evident injury. Revelation and Providence, being perfect, they must harmonize, they must speak the same language. Doctrines and events must accord, else both would not be perfect. Both emanate from divine wisdom; both are salutary in their influence on mankind; both are plain and evident, for all necessary or useful purposes. Yet both, in some respects are deep, are mysterious, are inexplicable. The same incomprehensible wisdom of God is manifest in the volume of providence and revelation.

The mystery of facts is less noticeable; because the facts are certain and familiar. The most luminous deductions of reason, and even the records of inspiration, do not generally make so *decisive* impressions on the mind, as the observation of *facts*. *Facts*, which strike the senses, we are compelled to admit, however mysterious and unaccountable, while speculative truths which are not more mysterious, are met with doubt, with resistance, with disbelief.—The most unlearned believe that the sun and moon are eclipsed, though they know not how. The learned believe that showers of stones, and sometimes huge masses of stone, have fallen from the clouds, though this is to them an impenetrable mystery. So do the word and providence of God harmonize.

I proceed to show that some of the most important and difficult doctrines of revelation, are supported by the events of Providence.

I. Revelation teaches the being of God; so do the events of Providence. "I, I am God, and there

is none else." "God created the heavens and the earth." Now, look at the events of Providence. Do they not, with ten thousand tongues, proclaim the existence of God? Do not the exact rising and setting of the sun; the regular return of summer and winter, demonstrate the existence of Deity? In one word, look at the marks of *design*, and *wisdom* on the open face of creation, marks visible in every object, from the smallest atom, to the greatest globe of heaven, and then say if these are not preserved and directed by an almighty, intelligent Being. Here then the word and providence of God unite and support each other.

II. Revelation declares that man has rebelled against God and is a sinful creature. "All have gone out of the way—none doeth good, no not one." If all had not sinned, why should Christ make propitiation for the sins of the world? Why should the gospel of mercy be addressed to all, if all had not sinned? Is not this doctrine supported by Providence? Look at the events of Providence. Are you not confirmed in the doctrine of human depravity? Whether you contemplate the treatment which man receives from his Maker, or the conduct of men towards one another, you are equally convinced that sin, universally prevails. Would the God of goodness let loose tempest and earthquakes, pestilence and death, on a race of innocent and holy beings? Do angels and the spirits of just men

made perfect, encounter these calamitous events? Why are the best disciplined countries furnished with jails and dungeons, terrified with penal laws, and punished by judges? Why do men delight in war, and cheerfully endure military burdens, and fight and murder, till "the mountains are melted with blood?" The base lusts of men are the only solution of these terrible phenomena. So do the gospel and providence of God harmonize and support each other.

But some may reply, "we object not to the doctrine of depravity; but to the doctrine of *native* depravity."

To some, possibly, this may seem an unreasonable, if not an impossible doctrine. But unless we adopt this, how are we to account for that *universal* wickedness, which abounds through the world? Why is it that *none* are entirely good, no not *one*? "By one man sin entered the world and death by sin, and so death has passed upon all, because *all have sinned*." "Adam begat a son in his own likeness," like himself, a dying sinful creature. Do not such texts seem to teach, that there was a connexion between the sin of Adam, and the wickedness of his posterity? By the disobedience of that one man, "many were made sinners." He sinned, and his posterity are not innocent. Though his sin was not their sin; for this would be an absolute impossibility; though his sin was not imputed to them; for

this would be merciless injustice ; disobedience of Adam and the yet might not his sin be the occasion of their wickedness ? Does not this accord with daily facts, in the course of Providence ? Is it not a familiar fact, that wicked men are made wicked by the vicious examples of others ? Is it not proverbial, "Like father, like son ?" What vicious character is more common, than a profane, idle, intemperate son, of a profane, idle, intemperate father ? Have not the sons of Ishmael, retained the character of their father, through all the changes of place and education for three thousand years ? On this principle, have not those men, who associate together, generally a great likeness of moral character ? Hence soldiers and sailors and other professions, have strong features of moral resemblance. On this principle whole neighbourhoods, and whole nations have a similar complexion of morals. Why then should it be thought a thing incredible, for the posterity of Adam to be constituted sinners by his sin and rebellion ? If the two cases be not exactly similar, as they, confessedly are not, still, may not their strong resemblance prevent surprise, and reconcile us to the luminous evidence of revelation ? Why might not the sin of Adam be as fatal to his posterity, as the sins of other fathers generally are to their children ? If the scriptures do teach the inseparable connexion between the wickedness of his posterity ; if this does not contravene what we witness every day in the malignant contagion of vice ; if Providence coincides with revelation ; if familiar facts from generation to generation support and confirm the texts which record the doctrine, why should we doubt, why should we not believe the doctrine ? The mode of its being effected, or the wisdom of such an arrangement is no concern of ours. To ascertain *the fact* from scripture and providence, is our duty ; its righteousness and wisdom God will justify.

III. Revelation teaches that sinful man, to enjoy his Maker's love, must have a new heart, a new spirit and character. Unless a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Does not Providence confirm this ? Does not the wicked man sometimes "forsake his ways, and the unrighteous man his thoughts ?" Pharisees and sanctimonious hypocrites, prating of their own goodness, may weaken the evidence of experimental religion, but they have not weight of character, to disprove its reality. Many men abandon their infidelity, and believe the son of Mary to be the Saviour of the world ; many forsake their vices and crimes, and become penitent and holy. All such are witnesses for revelation. All such, from Adam to the present day, present so many events of Providence, which harmonize with the

gospel, and sustain the doctrine of regeneration.

IV. The gospel is believed to reveal the doctrine of future punishment for sin. Do not events of Providence in this world confirm the doctrine?

“The wicked shall be turned into hell—these shall go away into everlasting fire. Their worm shall not die; their fire shall not be quenched.”

Objections have been made to this doctrine; but they come from a very interested quarter. The judge seldom finds the prisoner very impartial in his view of the law. Can we not then appeal to a more impartial authority? May we not consult the Legislator himself? May we not learn the intent and meaning of the sentence, by observing whether he in any degree ever puts it in execution before our eyes? Let us then for a moment survey the treatment, which wicked men, in this world, often receive from God. If any suffer the anger of God in this world, though others escape, this will greatly confirm revelation. If any escape, it may only prove that they are reserved for that punishment, which has already commenced with others. That portion of the Divine conduct, which you are permitted to witness in this life, what you see and hear, may instruct you in your faith respecting future punishment. Glance your eye then far and wide. Alas, you need not, generally, look beyond your own neigh-

borhood. Look and say, whether God punishes sin *in this world*. Does the intemperate man often suffer pain, and disease, and death, in consequence of his sins? Does the idle and dissolute man, often experience poverty and shame on this side the grave? Are not here powerful presumptions, of a future and more complete retribution? If God begin to punish sin in this life, will not the work proceed in the next? What is there more strange in future punishment, than in what daily passes before our eyes?

Had we never known pain, and disease, and death, and had a volume come down to us from remote antiquity, announcing that in the year of our Lord 1826, our heavenly father would let loose famine, and war, and pestilence; that tempests, and floods, and shipwrecks, would blast the hopes of man; that ten thousand infants would expire in agony every day, would not such a book have encountered as many objections, as the doctrine of future punishment now does? Would not men have inquired, and inquired with overwhelming pathos, “Will our heavenly Father cause our tender, harmless babes to languish and expire in agony? Will the God of love, suffer the helpless mariner to sink in the ocean, while his hands are raised in prayer? Will he water the world with the tears of the widow and orphan?” Yet such things are. They are daily events before our eyes.

We are miserable judges of what Deity ought to do. "We can argue, but from what we know." The plan of God is wide as the universe, and lasting as eternity. We see only a point, and for a moment. We have no compass to guide us, but the word of God, and our own observation. We then return to the *fact*. Has God said that he would punish the wicked forever, and is this powerfully confirmed by daily events? The word and providence of God are perfect, and are in unison.

V. The doctrine of *atonement*, or vicarious sacrifice for sin, seems to be taught in scripture. Do any events in the course of Divine government support such a doctrine?

"Without the shedding of blood is no remission of sin." "He hath born our sins, and by his stripes we are healed." "He was made a sin offering for us."

Similar language in every part of the Bible renders the doctrine unquestionable. Do not unnumbered events and transactions of men accord with this doctrine? God required his people to offer a multitude of sacrifices. These had no efficacy in themselves. The blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin. Unless they had reference to a real and meritorious sacrifice, of which they were types and emblems; who can discover wisdom or humanity in these bloody rites? Yet they constituted a great part of the external religion, not only of the Jews; but

of all mankind. In what quarter of the globe, have not the stones been piled into altars, what hill has not been wrapt in the smoke of burnt offerings? The blood of innocent victims has streamed from the line to the poles. Referring to such a state of things, the Apostle says, "But now, in the end of the world, Christ hath appeared to put away sin, *by the sacrifice of himself*." Can words make the doctrine of atonement more evident?

Not only in the great concerns of *religion*, but in the ordinary events of life, the same style of providence is manifest; daily transactions accord with the strain of scripture, respecting the suffering of one man *for another*. The substitution of one man's suffering for the benefit of another man, is one of the most common events of this world. Why then might not Jesus Christ suffer for the sins of the world? Do not parents constantly suffer anxiety and self-denial, and distress, to support and educate their children? Do not children often suffer from the prodigality, or vicious examples of their parents? Faithful rulers suffer abuse and anxiety for the public welfare. "Uneasy lies the head, which wears a crown." Go with the officer, collecting the tax to support the alms-house. He receives a great portion of the money, from families, who labor harder, and who endure more privations, than those persons, whom they support, ever did for them-

selves. They are made to suffer *for those*, who would never suffer for themselves. Do not the healthy suffer for the sick ; the living for the dying ? Do not these events strongly resemble atonement for sin ? Why then will any object to the sufferings of Jesus Christ for lost man ; why might he not redeem a lost world ? He suffered willingly ; he *gave* himself a ransom for many. Here then the providence of God agrees with the word of God ; both are perfect, and the word receives support from the course of providence.

VI. A considerable portion of the Christian world believe, that they have discovered the doctrine of *Election* to eternal life on the sacred page. Is this supported by the course of providence ?

They do not doubt whether the scripture speaks of those, who are *chosen* to eternal life "through the sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth." That some are chosen vessels, they cannot disprove. That some are fore-chosen and predestinated to eternal life seems to them the evident import of the sacred page. It is also believed that common events of Providence are in unison with this doctrine of the gospel, that in this point also, revelation receives support from Divine government. An appeal to facts may readily solve the question. Does God then daily in his providence make *distinctions* among men ? are some "chosen" "few" more rich,

more learned, more happy, than their neighbours ? May it be replied, that this is, generally, the effect of more diligence, more study, more virtue ? So are those "elected" and "saved," generally more virtuous, more faithful in their lives. But we will not avail ourselves of this advantage. I might ask, who made all these individuals to excel their neighbours. But if I can adduce only one instance, and especially, if I can adduce innumerable instances of eminent Divine favors, without any special merit or exertions, these will be so many unisons with election to eternal life.

Does not God in his providence, in ten thousand, thousand instances, highly distinguish persons by his favors who have no peculiar excellence, and without any regard to their merit ? Doubtless he has some wise reasons, though they are unknown to us. This is placing the doctrine in its most obnoxious form ; and in this form, we presume to say, it receives countenance from the general course of Providence.

Probably, no person in this country attaches the least personal merit to the circumstances of a man's *birth*. No child is better or worse, born in a palace or a shed. No matter whether he be, "Below the dome, or above the hut." Yet on this single circumstance of *birth*, commonly, depend, in a great measure, the knowledge, the religion and happiness of the person. One is born in the cot-

tage of vice, and endures hunger and cold, and generally, though not always, exhibits the vice and ignorance of his father. Another is born in the sober mansion of piety and knowledge, and often, though not always, acquires the knowledge, the virtue and happiness of his parents. One poor babe, without any fault of his own, is born in Africa, and is a slave.—Another, receives existence in the wilds of America, and of course is a pagan and a savage. Another first sees the light in Arabia, and spends his life following his flocks from one spring and pasture to another, often scorched with the burning winds of the desert, often mad with hunger and thirst, his hand against every man, and every man's hand against him, a robber on the land and a pirate on the sea, Mahomet his Prophet, and the Koran his Bible.

You are born in a christian land of christian parents, who are faithful and kind, who instruct you by precept and example, to be a disciple of Jesus. What an immense difference is here made by the providence of God, between man and man. Is not here a display of divine sovereignty, disregarding all personal merit, as evident, as in *election* to eternal life? Indeed, where can you look, and not witness a manifestation of this divine attribute? Who gave to Buchanan his spirit of sacred enterprise, to the apostolic Elliot his willingness to labor for the salvation of savages, to Whitfield his over-

whelming eloquence, to Edwards, his fervent piety, and wonderful energy of mind? Does not God in his providence, as well as his word, say, "I will do all my pleasure, and my counsel it shall stand?" His word and his providence agree, and are perfect. He is of one mind in the kingdom of grace and providence, in the events, which we witness, in the doctrines, which we read. With a single reflection or two, we close the subject.

I. We obtain no relief by rejecting the deep and difficult doctrines of revelation.

Though you blot them from your creed, Providence spreads them before your eyes, sounds them in your ears, reveals them from every quarter. Though you erase them from your bibles, they are written in capitals, on every page of Providence.

Many doctrines, as matters of *speculation*, are difficult, and hard to be understood, in all their connexions; yet as matters of *fact*, revealed, which is enough for us, they are as easily believed as other matters of *fact*. In many respects, facts are as inexplicable, as the most abstruse doctrines.—The doctrine presents no more difficulty, than the fact, which accords with the doctrine. No more difficulty attends the doctrine of atonement, than the familiar event, that the son suffers misery from the depravity of his father. With their incomprehensibility, we have no concern.—

This belongs to God. What then is gained by rejecting the most mysterious doctrines? They are written not only in the sacred oracles; but on your fields and walls; on your garments, on your foreheads, and the doors of your houses. Providence and revelation are two sacred volumes, which give the same account of God, and of his dealings with men.— Though we reject the doctrines of one volume, the other, in a voice louder than all the winds of heaven, proclaims the same divine truths.

II. I infer that a careful observation of providence may confirm our belief in the doctrines of revelation. Do you ever doubt whether the sufferings of the Saviour could be the redemption of sinners? Then recollect how often the cares and peaceful sentiments of a sovereign, might save his subjects from the misery and horrors of blood and war. See hospitals and seminaries rise; see nations and countries enlightened and sanctified, by the sacrifices of benevolence. It seems to be a principle of the divine government, which keeps the machinery of the world in motion, that a part of mankind should endure sufferings in behalf of the brethren.

Do you doubt whether God will punish the wicked? See, how many do not live out half their days. Do you question whether God chooses some to be vessels of mercy? Behold Joseph, and Da-

vid, and Daniel in sacred story. In civil and ecclesiastical history, read the lives of Alfred, of Edward VI. of Wickliff, of Luther, and Knox. Who selected these luminaries of the world. Who appointed them their high stations in the kingdoms and churches of the world? Who gave them their astonishing powers of mind, their grace, and their intellectual empire over the hearts of men?— Such is the accordance of divine truth, collected from different sources. Who then will not believe? With the mystery of divine truth, again I say, you need not perplex your minds. With explanations and solutions of profound doctrines, you need not try the strength of your intellectual powers. Your duty is prayerfully and teachably to inquire, “What doth the Lord God say in his word?” Having discovered this, believe and embrace it with all thine heart. Then shall ye know, if ye follow on to know, the truths of revelation. Take then fast hold of instruction; keep her, for she is thy life. She will bring thee to honor; she will give thee an ornament of grace, and a crown of glory.

THE CONTROVERSY BETWEEN GOD AND
SINNERS.

Though a controversy always supposes two parties, yet it may be either partial or mutual. A partial controversy is when only

one party complains. A mutual controversy is when both parties complain. The controversy between God and sinners is mutual. For sinners complain of God and God complains of sinners. That there exists a mutual controversy between God and sinners is so evident, that there is no occasion to prove it. But in our attention to this subject, I propose,

I. To consider the foundation of this mutual controversy. And certainly it cannot arise from ignorance on the part of God. He is perfectly acquainted with all his creatures. He knows all the views and feelings of sinners. And it is no less certain, that the controversy on the part of sinners is not owing to their ignorance of God. Though they are very ignorant of their Maker, yet their opposition to him does not arise from their ignorance. For sinners, who know the most of God, are the most apt to complain of him. We must, then, look deeper than to their mutual ignorance for the foundation of the mutual opposition between God and sinners.—The truth is, it arises entirely from mutual opposition of heart. The heart of God is directly and totally opposed to the hearts of sinners. God is love. His heart is pure, perfect, impartial and disinterested benevolence. He is good unto all his creatures without a single exception; and truly loves every creature that exists. His universal benevolence is absolutely impartial. He loves no

creature too much nor too little. He loves the whole more than a part; and a part less than the whole. Hence there is none good but one, that is God. He is supremely and immutably good.—He is perfect goodness without a single contrary affection.

But sinners are not so. There is none good; no, not one. In their hearts there dwells no good thing. They have not the least degree of impartial, disinterested goodness. They are wholly selfish. They regard the good of none but themselves. Their hearts, therefore, are directly and totally opposed to the heart of God. And so far as this mutual opposition of heart is known, it must produce a mutual controversy. God will complain of sinners and they will complain of him, so long as this mutual opposition of heart remains. And this mutual opposition of heart is the only foundation of the mutual controversy between God and sinners. It is proposed,

II. To consider the extent of this controversy.

Some mutual controversies are small and trifling. They respect but few things, and those of little importance. But the controversy between God and sinners is extremely great and extensive. It may, however, be reduced to two or three important points.

1. The controversy between God and sinners extends to all their affections. God has affections towards himself and all oth-

er beings. Sinners have affections towards themselves, and all other beings, with which they are acquainted. But his affections and their affections are mutually and perfectly opposite. His affections are perfectly benevolent; but their affections are perfectly selfish. His love opposes their love; his hatred their hatred; and his desires their desires. And hence arise their mutual complaints. God complains of all their affections. And he condemns sinners for their feelings towards him, towards themselves and their fellow-creatures. He even calls their tender mercies cruelty.—They, on the other hand, complain of God, for all his feelings towards himself, and towards all his creatures. They say, he too highly regards himself in setting himself above all other beings.—They say he too highly regards the holy part of the creation, and that he is unjust and cruel in his feelings towards sinful creatures. Thus their mutual controversy extends to all their affections towards all objects in the universe.

2. It extends to all their designs. God has formed all his designs respecting himself and all his creatures from eternity. And all his designs were dictated by universal and disinterested benevolence. He has determined to fix every creature in such a place and treat him in such a manner, as will best promote his own glory, and the largest measures of holiness and happiness in the moral system.—

But all the designs of sinners are dictated by total selfishness. They design to promote their own happiness, though it be at the expence of the happiness of all other beings. Though they do not always see, that their designs are opposed to the glory of God, and the universe; yet they are formed without any regard to these great objects and are really calculated to destroy these objects.—Hence God, who perfectly sees the nature and tendency of all the designs of sinners, hates and opposes their designs. And they hate all the designs of God, so far as they understand them. They are so fully convinced, that all his designs are truly benevolent, that they hate and oppose the sentiment, that his designs extend to all creatures and all events. The mutual controversy between God and sinners, therefore, does really extend to all their designs, without a single exception. God knows and opposes all the designs of sinners. And though sinners do not know all the designs of God, yet they hate all his designs on the ground, that they are entirely opposed to their designs.

3. The mutual controversy between God and sinners extends to all their conduct. God always acts agreeably to his affections and designs. As these are benevolent, all his conduct is benevolent. Whether he smiles or frowns; whether he bestows good or inflicts evil; whether he saves or destroys; he always acts from

pure and perfect benevolence.— Every part of his conduct in creation, providence and redemption coincides with his eternal purpose, which he purposed in Christ Jesus. But sinners always act agreeably to their feelings and designs, which are totally selfish. Though they are sometimes obliged to renounce their designs, yet they form new ones, which are equally selfish.— In their secular and religious actions, they have the same object, which is their own private, separate interest. Whether they eat or drink; whether they read or pray; whether they are openly vicious or openly moral; they act the same selfish part. It therefore appears, that their conduct and the conduct of God are directly and totally opposed. God means to act in opposition to sinners; and they mean to act in opposition to him. The mutual controversy between God and sinners is as great and extensive, as it can possibly be. They are constantly, universally and perfectly opposed in their affections, designs and conduct. This leads us to enquire,

III. What can put an end to this unhappy, mutual controversy.— Sinners often feel concerned about the consequences of this controversy and anxiously inquire what they must do to put an end to it. They are certainly right in supposing, that there is, on their part, something to be done; and it is easy to show what it is. It is nothing more nor less, than to become entirely reconciled to God. As soon as they

are so reconciled to God, they will renounce all their murmurings and complaints against him. And upon these and no other terms God will close his controversy with sinners. He says, "I love them that love me." God will not be reconciled to sinners, until they first become reconciled to him. This will clearly appear from the following considerations.

1. God knows, that he is right and that sinners are wrong in their mutual controversy. He knows that mutual opposition of heart is the sole ground of it; and that the sinner's eye is evil, because he is good. He knows his own heart and the hearts of sinners.— He knows that his heart is perfectly benevolent and that their hearts are totally selfish. He knows that benevolence is perfectly right and that selfishness is perfectly wrong. Hence he clearly sees, that he has just ground to complain of sinners and that they have no ground to complain of him. They hate him without a cause; but he hates them because they deserve to be hated. And so long as God has perfect justice on his side, he never will be reconciled to sinners, until they renounce their unreasonable complaints and cordially approve of his character and conduct, which are holy, just and good. He knows it would be utterly inconsistent to meet sinners upon any other terms.

2. God knows that sinners know, that he is perfectly right and that they are totally wrong. Sinners

know the nature of benevolence and of selfishness; and they clearly see, that he ought always to feel and express universal benevolence and they ought not to feel and express a spirit, that is directly opposite. But they know that they have felt and expressed no other spirit, either towards themselves, or God, or any other being. Hence they know, that God has always had abundant reason to complain of their views and feelings in all their conduct and that they never had the least reason to complain of any of his affections, designs, or actions. And God knows that they know it to be so. Hence he often appeals to their own consciences to justify him and condemn themselves. He says "O my people, what have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? testify against me." Again he says "Ye say, the way of the Lord is not equal. Hear now, O house of Israel; is not my way equal? are not your ways unequal?" Here God appeals to sinners themselves, whether he has not done right and they have not done wrong. He knows that they know, that he has sought the good of the universe, while they have opposed it. Now, if sinners know that God is right and that they are wrong in their mutual controversy, then they know that he ought to insist upon their reconciliation to him, as the condition of his reconciliation to them. They know it would be inconsistent with the character and rectitude

of the sovereign of the universe to cease from contending with them, until they cease from their contention with him. This then must be the only proper condition of their pardon and acceptance with God.

3. God knows, that he can make it appear to all intelligent beings, that the controversy between him and sinners is just on his part and unjust on their part. True benevolence approves itself to the minds of all moral beings. They have but one opinion respecting moral rectitude; and that is, that it consists in disinterested benevolence. Hence they are constrained to justify every moral agent, who acts from benevolence and to condemn all moral agents, who act from selfishness. And hence God is able to make all moral agents see his perfect rectitude in his benevolent government of the world and the criminality of sinners, who complain of his government. On this firm ground, he appeals to the universe, that he has done right and that sinners have done wrong. "Hear ye now what the Lord saith: Arise, contend thou before the mountains and let the hills hear thy voice. Hear, O mountains, the Lord's controversy; and ye strong foundations of the earth." These are strong and lively figures, which are designed to express, most forcibly, God's readiness to appeal to the universe respecting the merits of the controversy between him and sinners. And this shows, that

he can make it appear to all intelligent creatures, that he has treated sinners perfectly right and that they have complained of him without the smallest foundation. This affords the most convincing evidence, that nothing can put a period to God's controversy with sinners, but entire reconciliation and unconditional submission to him on their part. God knows they are wrong and that he is right. And God knows that he can make the universe know that they are wrong and that he is right. For these reasons he ought, he must, he will insist upon it, that they cease to contend with him, that they justify his whole conduct, wholly condemn themselves and submit to his sovereign mercy. Upon these terms and upon no other terms can sinners make their peace with their justly offended Creator and Sovereign.

It is now proposed,

IV. To inquire when is the proper time for sinners to put an end to their controversy with God.—To this inquiry the answer is plain and easy. The present is the most proper time. For,

1. It is as easy to comply with the terms of acceptance now, as it ever will be. God requires nothing but what is reasonable and what depends entirely upon the choice of sinners. He sets life and death before them, upon the easy condition of reconciliation to himself. God is infinitely amiable; and sinners are capable of loving him immediately. They

may, therefore, instantly comply with the terms of life and peace. It is as easy now to renounce their groundless opposition to God, as it ever can be. Now, therefore, is the most proper time to become reconciled to God and secure his favor.

2. The present is the time that God requires sinners to settle their controversy with him. He not only invites, but commands them to become immediately friendly to him. He says, "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." He says "Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord and he will have mercy upon him." Again he commands, "Turn ye, turn ye; for why will ye die?" Again, "Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." God has set the present time, as the most proper, for sinners to return to him and secure his pardoning mercy. And his invitations and commands are clothed with infinite authority. Sinners, therefore, are under infinite obligations immediately to renounce their enmity and become heartily and entirely reconciled to God.

3. Any other time than the present may be too late. Sinners know not what a day may bring forth. They have no security of

to-morrow. Death may seize them any moment, and after death their controversy with God can never be settled. God will then array himself in righteous vengeance and bar the gates of heaven against sinners and confine their souls in hell for ever. This appears from the parable of the foolish virgins. This appears from the parable of the rich man, who outstood his day of grace. This appears from all the threatenings of God to those, who are impenitent. It is only in this life, which may be only on this day, or even this moment, that sinners are sure of any opportunity to make their peace with God and obtain his pardoning mercy. From what has been said on this subject, it may be remarked,

1. That that scheme of religion, which is built upon the doctrine, that God must be reconciled to us, before we can be reconciled to him, is essentially erroneous.—According to the scriptures God is displeased and angry with sinners. And they are condemned by his law to the pains of endless death. It is equally evident from the scriptures, that sinners hate and condemn God for his anger against themselves. Before there can be a mutual reconciliation between God and sinners, there must be an entire change either in him or in them. But can God so renounce his holiness, as to be reconciled to sinners, while they hate and oppose him? Has Jesus Christ, by his mediation between

God and man, condemned God and justified his enemies? Does the gospel offer forgiveness and salvation to sinners, without requiring their repentance towards God and their reconciliation to his condemning and punishing justice? Can any sinner be saved, through the gospel of the grace of God, unless he justify God and condemn himself? It is a most erroneous and dangerous sentiment, that God can be reconciled to sinners, while they persist in their enmity against him. The apostle says to sinners, “be ye reconciled to God.” There is no other sentiment, that is more opposed to God and his law, to Jesus Christ and the gospel, than that sinners ought not to love God, while he hates them. Though this sentiment is very prevalent, and is the foundation of what is generally esteemed experimental religion, at the present day, yet it is essentially erroneous and exceedingly dangerous.

2. We may perceive the nature of genuine conviction. It consists in the sinner's seeing and feeling that God is altogether right and that he is altogether wrong. A sinner, under real genuine conviction, feels that God ought to hate, condemn and punish him for ever; and that he ought to love and praise God for ever for his holiness, justice, and goodness in the condemnation and punishment of sinners.

3. Sinners always grow worse under genuine conviction. A sight

and sense of the truth respecting God and themselves, excites and increases their enmity against him; and must always produce such an effect, until their hearts are changed. While they hate God, they hate him for his goodness. And the more clearly they perceive his goodness in opposition to their sinfulness, the more will their hearts rise in enmity against him.

4. We may perceive the immediate duty of sinners. They have something to do; and something of the highest importance. And they are justly required and bound to do it, without a moment's delay. It is their important and immediate duty to love God and hate themselves; wholly to justify God and wholly condemn themselves.

EPSILON.

THE SIN OF JUDAS ISCARIOT IN BETRAYING HIS LORD.

In a positive respect, no sin can be small. Every sin is, in the highest sense, committed against God—is the transgression of a holy, just and good law of perpetual obligation;—and therefore, must be stamped with a very high degree of moral turpitude. Yet, “some sins in themselves, and by reason of several aggravations, are more heinous in the sight of God than others.” Of this latter class is the sin, that Judas Iscariot committed, when he betrayed his Master. There were several circumstances connected with that

particular act of transgression, which concurred in stamping upon it a peculiar degree of moral turpitude. And being a sin of a peculiar character, it was followed by the most disastrous consequences to the perpetrator.

To describe the nature of the sin of Judas, in betraying Christ, is the design of this article.

Judas was a professed friend of Christ, and by his Master had been highly honoured, and treated with the utmost kindness.—An intentional injury done us by a professed friend;—by one, whom we have admitted to habits of intimacy with us, and on whom we have conferred great and unmerited favours; is a crime, that we ever, and justly too, regard as being stamped with a peculiar degree of turpitude. The case before us was strictly of this character. Judas was not a professed *enemy*, but a professed *friend* of Christ. His Master not only called him to be a disciple, but selected him from among the disciples to constitute one of his twelve apostles, and to be one of his constant companions. Judas was, indeed, in one respect, promoted among “the twelve,” in that he was constituted steward of the family. Nor is there a single intimation in the evangelical history, that his Master ever failed to treat him with the utmost tenderness. Yet, regardless of his professed friendship for Christ;—of the peculiar honour that Christ had conferred upon him, in calling him to become an apostle, in

permitting him to constitute one of his little family, and to hold daily converse with him;—and thus regardless of the ten-thousand tender obligations to unshaken fidelity, under which his Master had laid him, Judas betrayed his Master into the hands of his enemies.

Surely, then, that act of transgression must have been stamped with a peculiarly high degree of turpitude. With much propriety did our Saviour, in view of the treason of Judas, adapt, and apply to himself the language of the psalmist, “My own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, who did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me.”

Judas had seen and heard enough to convince him, that Christ is a Being of the most exalted character.

Constituting one of the college of the apostles, and being daily permitted to hold the most unrestrained intercourse with his Master, he must have been well acquainted with our Saviour’s manner of life, almost from the commencement of his public ministry. He had seen his Master perform the most astonishing miracles. He had seen him heal various kinds of sickness by a word, give sight to the blind, cause the lame to walk, feed many thousands with a few loaves and some small fishes, walk on the sea, still its tempestuous waves by a single command, and raise the dead. He had, moreover, heard Christ declare, that he was indeed the Messiah, that

he came down from heaven, that he existed before the time of Abraham, that they, who had seen him, had seen the Father, that he should again ascend on high, and should judge the world. All this and much more, there is good reason to believe, Judas had seen and heard. Certainly, then, he had seen and heard enough to convince him that Christ is a being of the most exalted character. In view of what he had seen and heard, it was morally impossible for him to have regarded Christ as an impostor. Must not the sin, then, which he committed in betraying his Lord, have been stamped with a peculiar degree of baseness?—Had he betrayed one of his fellow-apostles into the possession of an enemy bent on his destruction, he would have committed an offence of no ordinary magnitude. How incalculably great, then, must be the magnitude of the offence, that he committed, when he betrayed into the hands of his bitter enemies, a being, whom he could not but have regarded as sustaining a divinely-exalted character? He sinned, not only against endearing love, but also against great light. He could not plead ignorance as an excuse for his crime. He could not say, that he believed Christ to be a wicked man and an impostor, and only intended to deliver him up to merited punishment. No;—this he never pretended to say. But, on the other hand, he committed the sin, which is now the subject of remark, in

full view of the abundant evidence, with which he was favoured, that his Master was a being of the most excellent and the most exalted character. His sin was, therefore, stamped with a degree of criminality, which no human calculation can estimate.

The fact, that Judas betrayed his Master after he had been repeatedly warned and pre-admonished by Christ, is a circumstance, that is worthy to be taken into consideration.

Our Saviour frequently forewarned his disciples of the fact, that he was to be betrayed into the hands of men. While they abode in Galilee, Christ said unto them, "The son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men." "Behold," said he at another time, "we go up to Jerusalem, and the son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests, and scribes, and they shall condemn him to death." Only two days before the event, he said to them, "Ye know that after two days is the feast of the Passover, and the son of man is betrayed to be crucified." Thus Christ repeatedly forewarned his disciples, that he was to be betrayed. After he had set down with the twelve to eat the passover, he said to them expressly, "One of you shall betray me," and added, "The son of man goeth as it is written of him; but woe to that man, by whom the son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man, if he had not been born." All this was

heard by Judas Iscariot. He heard all, that Christ had said upon the subject. He had already covenanted with the high priests to betray Christ into their possession, at the time, when his Master declared to the twelve, that one of *them* would betray him, and pronounced the fearful woe upon him, who should become the traitor. And it would seem as if what Christ had said might have been sufficient to deter him from the fulfillment of his contract. But no;—disregarding the warnings of Christ, and bidding defiance to his threatnings, he deliberately proceeded to the execution of his nefarious purpose. By this circumstance, the turpitude of his crime was, in no small degree, enhanced. The light, against which, he sinned, was greater, than it would have been, if he had not been forewarned, and pre-admonished, in the manner, that has been described.

The time chosen by Judas for the execution of his purpose is a circumstance that is worthy to be taken into the account in estimating the turpitude of his offence.—He left the company of Christ and his apostles, at a time, when they had *just been* engaged, or actually *were* engaged in services the most sacred and solemn. Whether he left them *before*, or *after*, the institution and celebration of the Sacramental supper, is, perhaps, doubtful; though the more probable opinion is, that he was actually present at the institution and first

celebration of that holy ordinance. If this opinion is according to truth; then, *the time*, which he selected for the accomplishment of his purpose, is a circumstance, that serves to add to the enormity of his offence. For him, *at any time*, to have departed from the company of Christ and his apostles, for the purpose of betraying his Master into the hands of his enemies, would have been a crime of a scarlet hue. But for him to leave them for the accomplishment of his purpose, *at the very time*, when they had *just been*, or actually *were*, engaged in those affecting religious services, which were performed in the "large upper chamber furnished;" and in a part or all of which services Judas had himself participated; is a circumstance, that, by all, who, for a moment, reflect upon it, must be regarded as having added not a few spots of crimson to his offence.

The place, where Judas selected for the accomplishment of his purpose, is also a circumstance worthy to be mentioned. It was the garden of Gethsemane. Into this garden our Saviour was accustomed frequently to retire for devout conversation and religious exercises. It was, therefore, in a sense, a consecrated place. It had, in a sense, become sacred, in consequence of the frequency, with which it had furnished Jesus and his disciples a retreat from the bustle of the world; of the heavenly discourses, which he had

there delivered; and of the many prayers, he had there offered. Sacred as it was, it was the place, that Judas selected, for the accomplishment of his iniquitous purpose. Yes;—it was the garden of Gethsemane—a place, that had been watered by the *tears*, and consecrated by the prayers of his Lord; where he had frequently set with his fellow-apostles and heard those gracious words, which proceeded out of his lips; and where, he must have known, his Master had now retired for prayer and religious conversation:—it was *this* hallowed enclosure, into which Judas entered, with an armed multitude, and fulfilled his nefarious contract.

That Judas was not solicited to betray his Lord, is another circumstance worthy to be noticed in describing the nature of his offence. Knowing, that the chief priests and rulers were desirous to get Jesus into their power without public disturbance, Judas went to them of his own accord, and said "*What will ye give me and I will deliver him unto you?*" The thought does not seem to have entered their minds, that one of the disciples of Jesus could be induced to betray him. But when one of the disciples presented himself before them, and offered to betray his Lord into their hands they were glad of the opportunity of accomplishing the object, they had in view. They loved the treason, though they, doubtless, hated the traitor. But

did Judas betray his Lord unsolicited? It is, surely, a circumstance, that should be taken into the amount in estimating the turpitude of his offence. We ever regard it as some little palliation of an offence, if it was committed after earnest and repeated solicitation. Earnest and repeated solicitation may, and often does, have such a powerful effect upon the mind, as to persuade persons to do that, at the thought of which they would, previously, have shuddered. This is a circumstance, that is, or ought to be, taken into consideration in estimating the comparative turpitude of similar overt acts of transgression. An act of transgression, that is committed without solicitation, is more criminal, than a precisely similar overt act of transgression, which is committed after earnest and repeated solicitation. It may be, therefore, truly said, that the transgression of Judas, which is now the general subject of remark, was stamped with a peculiar degree of baseness, in as much as it was committed without the least previous solicitation.

The manner, in which Judas betrayed his Lord, is a circumstance, that served to enhance his offence. So great was our Lord's condescension to his disciples, and his familiarity with them, that he seems to have been accustomed to welcome their return, after they had, for a season, been absent from him, by affectionately permitting them to kiss him. Of this

peculiar token of friendship Judas availed himself, when he betrayed his Lord. It is said—"He gave them a sign, saying, whomsoever I shall kiss; the same is he; hold him fast;"—and that, "forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, Master, and kissed him." Yes; after having sacrilegiously entered the enclosure of Gethsemane with an armed multitude, he approached his Lord with the utmost effrontery, and, with an address expressive of the highest respect and affection, made use of a sign to point him out to them, which had been used by Jesus and his disciples as a token of their mutual esteem and friendship. The method he adapted to point out Jesus to the multitude, was, indeed, well suited to accomplish his purpose; as thereby his Master, was clearly designated from his disciples, by whom he was surrounded. Still, all, who reflect a moment upon the subject, must perceive, that, in thus using a sign, that had been common between Jesus and his disciples as an expression of their mutual affection; and which has ever been regarded as an appropriate expression of real friendship, Judas manifested a degree of baseness and ingratitude, which constituted no inconsiderable part of his heinous offence.

The motive, by which Judas was influenced, is another circumstance, that deserves to be considered, in estimating the turpitude of his offence. It was a love of the per-

ishable treasures of the earth. He went and said to the chief priests—"What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? and they covenanted with him, for thirty pieces of silver." He had habitually been under the controlling influence of a love of money. This disposition he manifested, at the time, when Mary poured a box of precious ointment upon the head of her beloved Lord. Under the apparent influence of regret at the supposed waste of the ointment, Judas exclaimed—"Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?" "This," we are informed, "he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein." Influenced by a sordid covetous disposition, he seems occasionally to have taken something from the common stock, under pretence of an anxious concern to supply the wants of the necessitous, and to have appropriated it to his own private use. Under the influence of the same predominant disposition, he went to the chief priests, and inquired of them what they would give him, if he would deliver to them his Lord. And so strong was his love of money, that, upon their offering to give him thirty pieces of silver—something like the sum of sixteen dollars—he immediately closed the contract with them. Yes; under the influence of a love of money, and for that paltry sum,

he agreed to betray into the hands of his bitterest enemies the Lord of Glory! Merely to mention this motive, by which Judas was influenced, is sufficient to show, that it contributed not a little towards stamping a peculiar degree of turpitude upon the sin, he committed, when he betrayed his Lord.

F.

DISINTERESTED LOVE THE ESSENCE
OF TRUE RELIGION.

Those who profess to believe the word of God, are generally agreed that the religion there revealed and recommended, consists essentially in love; but they are not so well agreed in respect to the nature of that love in which it consists. While some believe the truth on this momentous subject, the opinions of others concerning it are fundamentally erroneous. I shall offer a few thoughts upon it, in the hope that they may prove not altogether useless to the attentive reader.

There are two kinds of love of entirely opposite natures. One kind is benevolent; the other is selfish. One is supreme love to God, and terminates in his glory; the other is supreme love to a creature, and terminates in the glory and happiness of that creature. True religion must consist in one or the other of these kinds of love, because a third kind does not exist. All the moral exercis-

es of intelligent creatures are either benevolent or selfish. Those exercises which consist neither in benevolence nor in selfishness, are not *moral* exercises; and hence are neither holiness nor sin, neither religion nor irreligion. If then, true religion does consist in love, it must consist either in that which is benevolent, or in that which is selfish. To affirm that it consists in selfish love, is virtually to affirm that it consists in sin; for selfishness is the essence of all sin. When some of the angels fell, they ceased to love God supremely, and to make his glory their last end; and began to love themselves supremely, and to make their own interest their last end. The same was true of Adam at his fall. And all his un-renewed posterity are lovers of themselves, rather than of God, and make their own glory, instead of his, their supreme object. It is this selfish spirit that leads them to hate God, his law, his truth, his reign, and all his ways; and to hate, and bite, and devour one another. It is this that excites them to the commission of all kinds of wickedness. According to the scriptures, it is because mankind are "lovers of their own selves," and "all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's," that they are "covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those

that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, and lovers of pleasures, rather than lovers of God." Is this the spirit and are these the characteristics of the real christian? If true religion consists in selfishness, then it consists in that which operates in supreme and deadly enmity to God and his holy kingdom. And if true religion consists in selfishness, then true religion greatly abounds on earth, and much more in the regions of despair; for earth and hell overflow with selfishness. But who will seriously maintain that selfishness, whence proceed all the vices, crimes and blasphemies which spread through our world, and through the regions of despair, does constitute the religion of the gospel? Surely none but a maniac would maintain such an absurdity. If then there is any such thing as virtue, if there is any such thing as holiness, if there is any such thing as true religion, the conclusion seems unavoidable, that its essence is disinterested love. This plain conclusion is established by the word of God, in which religion is revealed, its nature described, and its genuine fruits exhibited. In requiring men to be religious, God requires them to love him with all the heart, and their neighbours as themselves. And they are also told that they must love, pray for and bless their enemies and persecutors, in order to be the children of their heavenly Father, or the subjects of his religion; which

shows that it cannot be a selfish religion, but must consist in pure, impartial benevolence.

Christ teaches that men cannot be truly religious, unless they exercise self-denial and unconditional submission. He saith, "whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple. If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it." Again, in the description of religion by Paul and James, they say that she "seeketh not her own," and is "without partiality." The whole of their description accords with this, and shows that disinterestedness is the sum of the religion which they taught. Indeed, the scriptures throughout represent the love in which religion consists, as being purely benevolent, and prove that it is so, by giving historical sketches of the lives of its possessors. While the pen of inspiration faithfully records the falls and the sinful deeds of the saints of old, it also records and delineates their holy characters. It draws, in strong and vivid colours, those actions which they performed in the exercise and under the influence of true religion. And must not every one who carefully examines those actions, be convinced that they were not selfish, but disinterested actions? Behold the patriarch Abraham, at

the command of God, raising his hand to slay his son, his only son Isaac, whom he loved with the strongest, tenderest affection; behold Moses, from love to the Divine character, refusing the most splendid offers of earthly power and grandeur, and desiring to be himself blotted out of the book which God had written, rather than hear his Maker's name blasphemed, and see his glory tarnished; behold afflicted Job, amidst all his accumulated woes, prostrating himself before the throne of Divine sovereignty, and saying in the fullness of his soul, "Shall we receive good at the hand of God? and shall we not receive evil? The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord;" behold Daniel choosing to be cast into the lions' den, and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, into the fiery furnace, rather than disobey and dishonour God by one sinful compliance; behold expiring Stephen, in imitation of his divine Master, praying for his persecutors and murderers, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge;" behold the apostle Paul declaring his willingness to be 'accursed from Christ, for his brethren and kinsmen according to the flesh,' and proving by a course of incessant toils, privations and sufferings, that the salvation of numbers of his fellow-men was dearer to his heart than his own; behold the prophets and followers of the Lamb, calmly communicating to a hostile world those pre-

cious truths which the Holy Ghost moved them to utter and record; boldly defending the revelations of his will amid the fiercest storms of persecution; and cheerfully sealing them with their own blood; behold the lives of these devoted men of ancient days, whose illustrious deeds adorn the sacred pages;—behold this bright cloud of witnesses for God, and say whether there is not the clearest evidence that their love was benevolent, that their religion was disinterested. Say whether there is not the clearest evidence that the Divine glory was indeed supremely dear to their hearts, was an object which they sought with intense desires, desires which rose high above all personal considerations, and which led them to make those mighty efforts and costly sacrifices they did for its promotion.

In closing what I shall at present offer in proof of the point under consideration, I would remark that Satan, whose impressions of divine truth are doubtless very clear and strong, knows that disinterestedness is essential to the nature of true religion. For in his eagerness to make it appear that Job's religion was not genuine but spurious, he represented it as consisting in selfishness.—“Doth Job fear God for nought?” said Satan. “Hast not thou made a hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his sub-

stance is increased in the land. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face.” Satan was allowed to strip the man he hated of all his possessions and all his children, and thus to induce him, if he could, to blaspheme the eternal name. He failed of success, but his failure did not dishearten him. He wished that to the losses of that holy man, corporeal sufferings might be added; and to this end said to God, “skin for skin, yea, all a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face.” Satan had liberty given him to inflict upon Job's person whatever he chose, short of taking his life. With this liberty, he went and smote him with a most painful disease “from the sole of his foot unto his crown.” But in this his last attempt Satan was completely foiled. Job, instead of cursing, still blessed his Maker, humbled himself under his mighty hand, and submissively received the heaviest strokes of his rod.—Thus it appeared more plainly than ever, that Job's friendship to God was not mercenary, that it sprung not from personal benefits received of him, that his religion was not selfish, that it consisted in pure benevolence, in that holy flame of love, which all the waters of affliction could not quench, but which rose higher and burned with more brightness

and intensity than ever amidst those waters. Such is the nature, and such are some of the fruits of that religion which Jesus Christ came down from heaven, and toiled, and bled, and died to establish and spread in the world. All the real subjects of it do exercise impartial, disinterested love, towards God, towards their fellow-creatures, and towards themselves.

If the preceding remarks are correct, then it is easy to distinguish between true and false religion. Whatever circumstantial differences there may be between the various schemes of false religion that have been invented and propagated in the world, they are all essentially alike, for they are all schemes of selfishness, and tend to promote selfish views and feelings. And if the scheme of true religion were founded in selfishness, though it might differ in circumstantials from the false schemes that prevail, still it would resemble them in its essential features; and hence it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, ever to ascertain which is the true scheme, and which are false. But since true religion consists in disinterested love, it does differ essentially from every false and selfish religion in the world. And if there is an essential and radical difference between them, then this difference may be easily discerned. Benevolence, which constitutes true religion, and selfishness, which constitutes every false religion, are perfect opposites. It is easy,

therefore, to distinguish between true and false religion. For all who have common sense, are capable of knowing what benevolence is, and what selfishness is, and of perceiving the contrariety there is between them. Hence they are greatly mistaken, who believe that it is a very difficult thing to know what true religion is, and distinguish it from that which is false. The difficulty is wholly imaginary. If persons of common discernment are in doubt and perplexity relative to this matter, it is because they love darkness rather than light.

If true religion consists in disinterested love, then the real subjects of it will be pleased with the leading doctrines of revelation, because these are all calculated to promote a disinterested spirit.—These doctrines are opposed to selfishness in every form that it assumes; and therefore totally selfish creatures are at heart always unfriendly to them, and are ever in danger of embracing selfish, false and fatal schemes of religion, which are perfectly congenial with their feelings. But since true religion is benevolent, all its doctrines are benevolent, and are happily calculated to promote a spirit of disinterestedness. Hence, they are very precious to all the truly religious. They are food to their souls. They are the joy and rejoicing of their hearts. Saith the Psalmist in his address to the divine Author of divine truth, “Thy word is very pure;

therefore thy servant loveth it.— O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day. Thy word have I hid in mine heart. Thy word hath quickened me. The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver. Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.” And the prophet Jeremiah saith to God, “Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart.” While selfish creatures hate revealed truth, and are offended with a clear exhibition of it, the benevolent do love it, and the plain and faithful preaching of it is to them a source of high satisfaction and delight.

If ministers would preach the gospel in a plain, faithful distinguishing manner, they must tell their hearers that true religion does consist essentially in disinterested love, explain to them the nature of such love, and call upon them to exercise it without delay. That mode of religious instruction is essentially defective, which leaves out disinterested benevolence, because it leaves out the very essence of that religion which ministers are commanded and solemnly bound to describe and inculcate. Mankind are all by nature totally selfish creatures. It is this selfishness of which they are the subjects, that constitutes their entire sinfulness, their total moral depravity. How necessary and important, then, it is to labour to

convince them of this, and to make them see and feel that unless they cease from loving themselves supremely, and exercise disinterested love, and perform disinterested actions, they can do nothing pleasing or acceptable to God, nothing but what he abhors and condemns, nothing but what enhances their guilt, and is preparing them for a more aggravated punishment in the world to come. This mode of religious instruction is indeed very far from being popular in our world, which overflows with selfishness; but yet it is the only mode that accords with the scriptures, that is approved of God, and that is not attended with danger to the souls of men. It should therefore be adopted and steadily pursued by all who engage in the work of the gospel ministry. Nor is it seen how any ambassadors of Christ can neglect to teach men so, and at the same time heartily aim to please God and save their hearers. It highly concerns all professed christians, whether ministers or not, to see that they have evidence themselves and give evidence to others of being the subjects of that charity, of that religion which “seeketh not her own,” and which is “without partiality;” for if they are destitute of this, though they should speak with the tongues of angels, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and have all faith, so that they could remove mountains, and bestow all their goods to feed

the poor, and give their bodies to be burned, it would profit them nothing. They would still be, in the Divine estimation, as sounding brass, and as tinkling symbols.

THEOPHILUS.

Messrs Editors,

If the following account of the recent revival of religion in Carver, Ms. may be thought useful to the public, it is at your disposal.

The Congregational church and Society in this town have been destitute of a settled minister for about *nine* years. During a great portion of that time, they have not been favoured with preaching. They have been called to encounter a large share of those trials and difficulties, incident to weak, divided, vacant societies. Those divisions and difficulties have been increased by the location of a new Meeting-house two years ago. They needed, and have received assistance from the Mas. Dom. Miss. Soc.

I commenced my labors among this people in July, 1823; and engaged to supply their pulpit for a year. The state of religion at that time, as justly considered by the church, was *very low*. But the Great Head of the church, in infinite mercy, was pleased to direct the adoption of such means as he was pleased to own and bless. A Sabbath-school, for the *first time* in the place, was established, with little, or no opposition; and went

into successful operation. Some of the church began *sensibly* to realize the declining state of religion among them, and to feel deeply on the subject. A few professors agreed to meet at each others houses weekly for *special prayer*. Meetings were well attended on the Sabbath. A prayer meeting, at the school-house near the meeting-house was attended, during the intermission, by members of the church, and others who were disposed. This, and the other weekly prayer-meeting, although small in numbers at first, like the cloud which the servant of Elijah saw rising out of the sea, like a man's hand, soon increased, not only in numbers, but in solemnity and fervor. On the 12th of September last, the church were detained after a preparatory lecture, and the *state of religion* among them was taken into very serious and prayerful consideration. In view of the representations which were made, and the duties which were enforced, considerable feeling on the subject was manifested. The brethren and sisters of the church *unanimously* agreed that it was their duty, and that they would, by leave of Providence, come forward next Lord's day, make a public confession of sin and neglect of duty—ask forgiveness of God, of one another, and of the whole assembly—and that they would *renew* covenant with God, and with each other. They did accordingly come forward on the next Lord's day, taking their

stand in the aisle; a very humble confession, to which they had previously agreed, was read to them from the pulpit, and unanimately assented to. They then renewed covenant with God and each other; and partook of the symbols of the Saviour's dying love at his table. Most of the congregation were spectators, and not without *feeling*. The season was peculiarly solemn and affecting, and will long be remembered by the friends of Zion, who were present.

On the 10th of October following after lecture, the church unanimately agreed to attend to some cases of discipline which had been unwarrantably neglected. They also agreed to set apart a day for fasting and prayer, to implore the Divine forgiveness of their sins, and the effusion of the Holy Spirit upon the church and people in this place. Accordingly the 17th of October was observed as a day of fasting and prayer. Several ministers in the vicinity attended, and assisted in the public services of the day. At this time, it was manifest, that the Lord had begun a good work among us. It was *then* ascertained, that one young person had recently entertained a hope of change of heart. Several were under serious and deep impressions of sin and danger. One person, a female past the meridian of life, was enabled to rejoice in hope of reconciliation to God on the evening of the Fast; and her sister in the same house, who had

been prevented attending meetings for several months on account of bodily indisposition, entertained a hope of pardoning mercy the next day. Religious meetings were now frequent, crowded, and solemn.

About this time, a weekly concert for prayer was agreed upon by the brethren in Carver, a number of the brethren of the first church in Middleboro' where a work of Divine Grace had been progressing for several months, and by a number of the brethren of the church in Plympton. This united Prayer-meeting, which was attended weekly in these three towns, was evidently attended with the Divine presence and blessing. Inquiry-meetings for those who were anxious, were attended weekly in different parts of the society; and, it is believed, with advantage. The work of Grace progressed in a very still, solemn, and gradual manner. There was not the least appearance of disorder or confusion. Evening meetings were not continued to a late hour. They were usually closed at half past 8 o'clock; and the people returned in a silent, and solemn manner.—The 25th of December was observed by the church, as a day of fasting and prayer. A number of neighbouring ministers attended, and officiated on the occasion. The work of Grace, which had appeared to be on the decline, again revived with increasing power.

Among the fruits of this revival

al of religion, we reckon about 60 converts. Persons of almost every age, from 8 or 10 to 82 years of age, were the hopeful subjects of the work. Many of the dear youth were seen renouncing the vanities of the world, submitting themselves to their Maker and Redeemer, and uniting themselves to God in a new and everlasting covenant, never to be forgotten.

There was nothing in this revival of religion in particular, to distinguish it from others which appear to be genuine. Those, who were deeply awakened to a sense of their sin and danger, were convicted in view of divine truth. They were made sensible of their entire depravity and sinfulness, and the necessity of a radical change of heart. In many cases, convictions of sin, of enmity and opposition to God, were very pungent and distressing. Some were in a state of anxiety and distress, but a few days before they entertained hope of a saving change; others, for weeks; and some, for months. When they were brought to hope in the divine mercy, they very generally appeared modest, diffident, unassuming, and fearful lest they were deceived respecting their real state and character. Generally, they were rather diffident, in relating the exercises of their mind, lest they should unintentionally state something, which, in reality, they had not experienced.

Forty-three persons have united with the Congregational church since the commencement of the revival, of whom there are fifteen males, and twenty-eight females.

It may be useful to notice particularly one signal instance of the Sovereign power and grace of God. A man eighty-two years of age, who, in consequence of bodily infirmities, had not attended meeting for several years, was very suddenly and powerfully awakened. When in a state of great anxiety and distress of mind, at his request his little grandson, only twelve years of age, who had entertained a hope of religion a few days before, came, and knelt by his bedside, and prayed with him and for him, in a very fervent and suitable manner. They are now both members of the visible church of Christ.

In the review of this wondrous work of Divine Grace, we are constrained to confess, *the Lord hath done great things for us whereof we are glad. Bless the Lord, O our souls, and all that is within us bless his holy name.*

Yours respectfully,

L. WRIGHT.

Carver, Mass. August 20, 1824.

MESSRS. EDITORS,

The following letter, written by a clergyman in Plymouth county, Mass. to his friend and former parishioner, now at Homer, N. Y.

is at your disposal. It is thought, by the subscriber, to contain an exhibition of plain, and affectionate pastoral fidelity, which, by a divine blessing, may be useful to the readers of the Christian Magazine.

L. W.

August 12, 1824.

DEAR SIR,

By some letters your brother has received, I learn, that some of my communications have met with a cordial reception. With the expectation of sending a line by Mr. C. I hastily address you.

The point I must insist upon is simply this.—*Are you a christian?* Do you heartily love Christ? One side of this momentous question you *must* take. There is no middle ground. If you are a christian say so by your whole life—say it publicly, say it to the world. Halt not between two opinions.—Live not in such a manner as will fill you with poignant anguish, when death shall make his silent approach, and close your opportunities by his irresistible conquest. Many have I known bitterly to lament their neglect of privileges, and their omission of duty, in the solemn hour of death. But lamentation is unavailing. The expiring moment is too late for amendment. God forbid this should ever be *your* case. But, dear sir, what you do, must be done before reason shall have left its throne, and understanding shall have retired under the combined and insupportable influence of sin

and death. You know the truth; at least, you have known it in speculation. Of course, you are chargeable with the greater sin, and exposed to a more fearful condemnation; if you hate the truth, or neglect a practical conformity to it. Do I hear your voice from a distant village, saying, “I am a poor, guilty, undone sinner.” This you have known for years; and this Saul knew was a truth in its application to himself. And the same atoning blood, which cleansed the heart of *Saul*, is also sufficient to cleanse *yours*. The same grace, which saved *him*, is also sufficient to save *you*. Are you then ready that this grace should abound towards you as towards the chief of sinners? Are you willing, that the great physician should heal your soul from the leprosy of sin, and clothe you with the robes of ever-shining beauty, in which your mortal deformity shall never appear? I insist upon it, the case *must* be decided. It must *no longer* be put off. It has been a time-serving business long enough. An external, heartless service merely, is no part of the service Jesus requires and deserves. The spontaneous effusions of a broken heart will please him, and nothing short of it. Have you any holy love, any godly sorrow, any retired, heart-melting seasons in view of the cross? Have you any trust in God, any fixedness of soul to lay hold of the bleeding Lamb, any unshaken resolutions never to

break your hold? Shall Jesus say in the day of judgment, that his ways of providence with you, which were designed to lead you from earth to heaven, have all been in vain? Let a mother's counsels and a father's prayers, dwell upon your mind. Did she not *tell* you to be good? Did not he *pray* that you might be good? Were they not agreed in saying to their children, that "to be a christian was every thing." Did they not unitedly labor, and pray that this might be your happy state?

And is it so? Have you a part with the people of God? Is their Saviour yours? If a religious education and pious example, if the love of God and the sufferings of Jesus are not sufficient motives to lead you from sin to holiness, surely you belong to that class, who "neglect the great salvation;" and how can you escape? What more shall I say? With *one* parting word, I take my leave. *Repent.*

I am sincerely yours,

AMICUS.

EXTRACTS.

Memento to the middle aged, taken from the loose papers of one, who, at forty-five, was suddenly removed by death, from the busy prospects of life.

A strange thought has followed me this afternoon. In passing through the streets of the town, engaged in business, on every meeting with an old acquaintance, this thought occurred, "Am I elder or more young than this man?" For the afternoon, I reflected on the enquiry as one of curiosity. In conversation with my wife, in the evening, the circumstance was related to her. She instantly replied, "Are you insensible, we draw near in age to those who are called old people?" It was the first time, through my whole life, that the thought ever occurred, of course it was repuls-

ed.—But in our subsequent discourse, reviewing several streets, with which we were both acquainted, and counting up the catalogue of our youthful companions, I became astonished at the number who sleep in the grave! Still I am left. I was more astonished in counting up the ages in my own family, and finding myself the parent of several, who are not unknown in the young and polite circle.—The next day, resuming my business with many people, the same thought returned, "Art thou elder or more young than this man?" with an addition to the enquiry, "Art thou ready to meet death, by which so many of thy youthful companions have been removed?" An incessant return of these questions has almost disqualified me

for business; for, indeed, I have never thought of death until now. It surprises me that I have been so inconsiderate.—Where were my reflections, when bearing on my own shoulders to the grave, the play-mates of my childhood, and two of my early companions in business.—If a sense of death and its consequences, must be so early crowded upon me, I must bid adieu to several schemes of gain, on which I have long meditated, and was now preparing to execute: I must join my testimony to a description of human life, which was always disagreeable to me, “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity and vexation of spirit.”

ANECDOTES.

AN AGED WOMAN.

An aged woman, on entering a place of deep affliction, after a few tears were shed, thus said “I am now at home.” It being known there was no connection between her and the afflicted family, inquiry was made why she said, “I am now at home.” After some apology for the manner of her expression she said, “There are two reasons, the first is; I have been a woman of affliction, and all afflicted people appear to me like brethren. Whether they profit or not, all such are certainly in the school of preparation for heaven. They are in the best state to learn we are sinners and need chastisement.

But I have a greater reason

than this. The apostle speaks of being at “home in the body and absent from the Lord.” Every Christian believes there is a state of mind, which is properly described by being at home with the Lord, and being absent from the painful influences and power of the world. In my first season of affliction I was stubborn and contended hardly with God. By the power of his grace he brought me to submit. In my succeeding afflictions I have been pained: time after time my heart hath been broken: still I have had much Christian enjoyment in the midst of troubles. I have been happy under my deepest calamities. I considered God on the throne, an absolute sovereign in all things, which pertained to the happiness or unhappiness of this life. I have learned that nothing which we do can merit happiness; I have learned to look to God as a fountain when the streams are dried away. It hath pleased the Lord to give me more clear manifestations of his presence in seasons of trouble than at other times. This led me to say, “I am now at home.” I am now in the midst of such scenes as have often broken my heart, but in which I have found a happiness, which the world cannot give. This convinced me that the words of the preacher are true, “it is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting; for that is the end of all men, and the living will lay it to his heart.”

HUME.

David Hume observed, that all the devout persons he had ever met with were melancholy. On this Bishop Horne remarked; this might very probably be; for in the first place, it is most likely that he saw very few, his friends and acquaintance being of another sort; and, secondly, the sight of him would make a devout man melancholy at any time.

COLLEGE RECORD.

HAMILTON COLLEGE.—At the commencement at Hamilton College on Wednesday, August 31, 17 young gentlemen received the degree of A. B. and 7 that of A. M. The degree of D. D. was conferred upon Professor Proudfit, of Union College.

BROWN UNIVERSITY.—The commencement of Brown University was held at Providence on Wednesday the 1st ult. The degree of A. B. was conferred on 41 young gentlemen, alumni of the institution; and that of A. M. on 20. The degree of M. D. was conferred on 12 young gentlemen. The degree of D. D. was conferred on the Rev. Henry Wright, of Bristol, and the Rev. Robert Semple, of Virginia.

WATERVILLE, (ME.) COLLEGE.—The commencement took place on Wednesday the 25th August. The degree of A. B. was conferred on 3 young gentlemen.

WILLIAMS COLLEGE.—Commencement, Sept. 1. The degree of A. B. was conferred on 15 young gentlemen, and that of A. M. on eight. The de-

gree of Doctor of Medicine on 10 gentlemen. Of D. D. on the Rev. Nathan L. S. Beman, of Troy, N. Y.; and the Honorary degree of Doctor of Laws, on the Hon. Elijah H. Mills, of Northampton, and Hon. Levi Lincoln of Worcester.

YALE COLLEGE.—Commencement, Sept. 8. The degree of A. B. was conferred on 68 young gentlemen, alumni of the College; that of A. M. upon 39 alumni. The degree of D. D. was conferred on the Rev. Thomas Charlton Henry, of Charleston, S. C.; and the degree of L. L. D. on Hon. Smith Thompson, Associate Judge of the Supreme Court of the United States.

BOWDOIN COLLEGE.—At the Commencement of Bowdoin College on Wednesday the 1st ult. thirteen young gentlemen were admitted in course to the degree of A. B. and eight to that of A. M. The honorary degree of L. L. D. was conferred on Gen. Lafayette, and on Parker Cleveland, Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy in the College.

INSTALLATION.

On Wednesday, Sept. 29, the Rev. Thomas Williams, was installed over the First Congregational Church in Attleborough. Introductory prayer by the Rev. Mr. Barney of Seekonk, Sermon by the Rev. Dr. Emmons, of Franklin. Installing prayer by the Rev. Dr. Park, of Brown University. Charge by the Rev. Mr. Fisk of Wrentham.—Right-hand of Fellowship by the Rev. Mr. Ferguson, of Attleborough, and the concluding prayer by the Rev. Mr. Ide, of Medway.

THE
CHRISTIAN MAGAZINE.

VOL. I.

NOVEMBER, 1824.

No. 11.

ORIGINAL COMMUNICATIONS.

SERMONS—No. VIII.

THE MUTUAL COMFORT OF CHRISTIANS.

I. THESSALONIANS, v. 11.—*Wherefore, comfort yourselves together.*

The epistle from which these words are chosen, was first addressed “unto the church of the Thessalonians.” The apostle repeatedly exhorts the members of that church to promote their own mutual comfort. This duty he enjoins in our text and enforces by several considerations, which are mentioned in the context. It is in view of these considerations, that he says to the members of the church of the Thessalonians, “wherefore, comfort yourselves together.” These words imply, that there are proper and sufficient sources of mutual comfort to christians. And they plainly show, that it is the duty of the members of a christian church to promote their mutual comfort. By the words of the text, then, I am lead, in the present discourse,

I. To consider the sources of mutual comfort to christians; and

II. To show that the members

of a christian church ought to promote their mutual comfort. It is proposed,

I. To consider the sources of mutual comfort to christians. True christians are closely united in reality, as well as by profession.—As they share in their common sufferings and sorrows, so they mutually partake of the consolations, which the gospel affords to the children of God. In the holy scriptures, God gives many instructions for the comfort of his people and plainly exhibits the sources, from which their mutual comfort is to be derived. From what is taught in the scriptures on this subject, it may be observed,

1. That christians may be mutually comforted by their appointment unto salvation. This source of comfort the apostle mentions in the context. He says to his christian brethren—“For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.” The same subject he mentions in the beginning of the epistle. He says, “knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.”

In his second epistle to the same church, he writes, "We are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning, chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." The divine appointment of christians to eternal salvation is mentioned in the different epistles to the churches, as a source of comfort to believers in Jesus Christ. This subject Christ often mentioned to his disciples for their comfort.—It is to their appointment unto salvation, that we are to ascribe, whatever God has done for the benefit of his people in this life, and for their future glory in heaven. When christians have a sight and sense of their sin and guilt, they feel wholly unworthy of the least favor; and they are sensible that they deserve the wrath of God forever. They are sensible that God would have been righteous and glorious, if they had been appointed unto wrath. They perceive, that it is of the infinite goodness and sovereign mercy of God, that any of mankind are saved from sin, shame and woe.—When christians consider, that God was pleased, for the glory of his name, to choose and appoint, in the counsel of his own will, that they should be saved, their hearts are withdrawn from themselves and from every created object and fixed upon the exceeding riches of his grace in Jesus Christ. In view of the sovereign and bound-

less grace of God, as it appears in the election of his people unto salvation, they rise to the highest and purest source of spiritual consolation. In view of this subject, the apostle writes "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace." The doctrine of election, when it is rightly and humbly considered by christians, affords such a bright display of the love, the mercy and the sovereignty of God, as is suited to fill their hearts with comfort amidst all the evils and sorrows they experience on earth. For such persons, as the apostle believed to be chosen and appointed unto salvation, he prays in these words—"Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God, even our Father, who hath loved us and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts."

2. The death of the Lord Jesus Christ for his people is a source of mutual comfort to christians.—This is also mentioned in the context. The apostle urges his brethren to take "for an helmet the hope of salvation." And

he then adds, "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us." The death of Christ for his people is a permanent foundation of comfort to their hearts. It exhibits an affecting and glorious evidence and expression of the goodness of God. John says to his brethren, "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins." In view of the death of Christ, christians are consoled, because it so fully displays the justice and the mercy of God, while it opens a way for the forgiveness and salvation of every sinner, who repents and believes the gospel. No holy being could ever consent that one sinner should be saved from the curse of the law, at the expence of the truth and justice of God. Now while sinners are justified freely by the grace of God through the redemption, that is in Christ Jesus, God is just and his justice appears very glorious in justifying every one, who believes in Jesus. When christians turn their hearts to the cross of Jesus Christ, whose blood cleanses from all sin, though laboring and heavy laden with sin and guilt, with shame and sorrow, with afflictions and temptations, yet there they find rest to their souls. Though they be feeble.

wretched and needy in themselves, yet through faith they can say—"If God be for us, who can be against us? He, that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God, that justifieth. Who is he, that condemneth? It is Christ that died." From the sorrow and death of Christ, christians receive their life and comfort. In view of his death they will forever rejoice and sing—"Unto him, that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever." The death of Christ is the life and strength, the hope and joy, the refuge and comfort, the glory and salvation of believers. The apostle says—"God forbid, that I should glory, save in the cross of Jesus Christ, my Lord, by whom I am crucified unto the world and the world unto me."

3. Christians may be mutually comforted by the gracious effects, which the Holy Spirit produces in their hearts. In the context the apostle mentions the knowledge, love, faith and hope of christians. In view of these blessed effects of the Holy Spirit, they are urged to comfort themselves together. Writing to the same persons the apostle says "When I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some

means the tempter have tempted you and our labor be in vain.— But now, when Timotheus came from you unto us and brought us good tidings of your faith and love; and that ye have good remembrance of us always, desiring greatly to see us, as we also to see you; therefore brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress by your faith. For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.” It is consoling to christians to behold in their brethren the excellent and lovely graces, which are produced by the special influence of the Holy Spirit. By the influence of the Spirit christians are caused to see the glory and beauty of God and of the law, of Jesus Christ and the gospel. As christians are united in their religious sentiments, they have mutual love in the truth.— While they see the image of Jesus Christ in his beloved people, their hearts are comforted in their friendship and society. The psalmist says unto God, “They, that fear thee, will be glad when they see me, because I have hoped in thy word.” The beloved disciple says to the well-beloved Gaius— “I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.” When Christians walk in the truth and feel and express the love, the faith, the hope and joy, which the Holy Spirit produces in their hearts,

they strengthen and comfort their brethren. How often have the faint and weary hearts of christians, who are ready to say in their haste, “all men are liars,” been revived by seeing in their brethren, the tenderness and beauty of holy affections! They, who love holiness and hate wickedness, are greatly comforted by perceiving in Christians the gracious effects, which the Holy Spirit produces in their hearts.

4. Christians may be mutually comforted in the prospect of their eternal residence with the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven. It is by this consideration, that christians are directly urged in the text, to comfort themselves together. The apostle says, “God hath not appointed us unto wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.” He then adds the words of our text—“Wherefore comfort yourselves together; and edify one another, even as also ye do.”— Again he says—“The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God. And the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we, who are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. And so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.” By similar considera-

tions, the Saviour comforted his disciples before his death. He said, "Let not your hearts be troubled: ye believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go & prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." The prospect of being with Christ and his people in heaven is suited to relieve and comfort the hearts of christians in their darkness and distress in this evil world. Notwithstanding his afflictions, temptations, and conflicts, the psalmist was consoled, when he was able by faith to say unto God, "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel and afterwards receive me to glory." The affliction of christians in this life seems light and but for a moment, in view of the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory in heaven. They shall be "before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more; neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat. For the Lamb, who is in the midst of the throne shall feed them and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." In prospect of the perfect and eternal blessedness of heaven believers

may well comfort themselves together. Having considered the sources of mutual comfort to christians, it is now proposed,

II. To show that the members of a christian church ought to promote their mutual comfort.

To show that this is their duty, it may be observed.

1. That they are required, in the scriptures, to promote the comfort of their brethren. By Isaiah, God says, "comfort ye, comfort ye my people." To the saints at Corinth, Paul writes, "For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be comforted." In the epistle, from which the text is chosen, the members of the church at Thessalonica are repeatedly required to comfort one another by very weighty and affecting considerations. These divine requirements bind christians at the present day, as well as in the days of the apostles. For the members of a church now need to be comforted as well as in former times. And every member needs to be comforted by the attention, the tenderness and kindness of the other members. The members of a church are able to comfort one another. And if they will only consider, that they are required by the Lord their God to comfort themselves together, they will at once perceive that they are bound to promote their mutual comfort by such an obligation as can never be broken.

2. The members of a church

solemnly engage to promote their own mutual comfort. When a church receives any persons into their communion, they bind themselves by their covenant with God to promote the spiritual welfare of every such person, and by their mutual covenant, they bind themselves to a faithful performance of the same duty. When a person joins a church, he engages to seek and to promote the peace and comfort of all its members. The members of a church mutually and solemnly promise and covenant to labor together for the common edification and consolation of all their brethren, with whom they are especially united by a public profession of religion. If then, they do not comfort one another and comfort themselves together, they break their solemn covenant and their endearing engagements.

3. By comforting their brethren the members of a church greatly increase their own spiritual consolation. "It is more blessed to give than to receive." To comfort the afflicted, tempted, and weary people of God, produces a high degree of happiness. For it is the exercise and expression of holy and gracious affections. Every pious member of a church enjoys the peace and comfort of the other members. Christians are so united, "that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice

with it." To the saints at Corinth, the apostle writes, "We were comforted in your comfort: yea, and exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy of Titus, because his spirit was refreshed by you all." The apostle was also greatly consoled by Philemon, because he comforted the hearts of the saints. He says, "We have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother." Faithful christians are always greatly comforted in the comfort of their brethren. They, who the most desire and labor to promote the comfort of other christians, enjoy the most comfort in their own hearts.

4. By promoting their mutual comfort the members of a church will secure and enjoy the presence and favor of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is called the Comforter. He produces in christians all the light, love, faith, hope, peace, joy and comfort, which they experience. The Holy Spirit delights in the comfort of his people.—And he greatly delights in all, who seek their comfort. Such persons as labor to promote the mutual comfort of christians, please the God of peace and comfort, and enjoy his special presence and favor. Such persons work together with God and perform a service, which is very important and pleasant in his sight. Hence Paul says to the members of the church in Corinth, "Be perfect; be of good comfort; be of one mind; live in peace;

and the God of love and peace shall be with you."—If, then, the members of a church would enjoy the presence and comfort of the Holy Spirit, they must be attentive and careful to comfort themselves together.

IMPROVEMENT.

1. If there be such sources of mutual comfort to christians; and if the members of a church are bound to comfort themselves together; then a faithful church must afford a very pleasant sight. The conduct of such a church will be pleasant. For all its members will possess and manifest a spirit of mutual love, kindness and sympathy. Every member of a faithful church will be tenderly affected towards all the other members, and will desire and labor to promote their comfort. And the whole church will be tenderly affected towards every member, and desire and labor to promote his comfort in the doctrines, duties and blessings of the gospel. The conduct, then, of a faithful church will be very beautiful, lovely, and pleasant. And equally beautiful, lovely and pleasant will be the condition of a faithful church—For their condition will agree with their conduct. A faithful church will be in a united, orderly, peaceful and happy condition.—The members of such a church will comfort themselves together in the eternal purpose of God respecting the redemption of his people. They will also derive comfort from the atoning sufferings of

the Lord Jesus Christ for their redemption. Feeling in their own hearts and seeing in their brethren the blessed fruits of the Holy Spirit, they will be comforted in the truth and by the grace of God.—And the earnest and prospect of their future and eternal communion and glory in heaven will fill their hearts with joy and peace. It must be a pleasant sight, indeed, to behold the lovely conduct and the happy condition of a faithful church.

2. If the members of a church are bound to promote their mutual comfort, then it is a great thing to be a member of a church. The members of a church are joined to a very important body. No other society, or communion, that ever exists on earth, is really so important as the society and communion of christian churches.—The members of such churches are united by the authority and influence of the adorable Trinity. And they are united for the most important purposes, that can be promoted on earth. To be a member of a church is not a matter of mere form, or name. It is to take a most important station. Every member of a church owes a great service to all the other members. He is bound to be attentive, watchful and faithful to promote their spiritual comfort. It is then a great thing to be a member of a church on account of the important services, which every member owes to the other members. It is also a great thing, on account

of the important privileges, to which a member of a church is entitled. For he is entitled to the services and consolations, that arise from the friendship and communion of christian brethren. To be a member of a church, then, is not a matter of mere profession and appearance. But it is, indeed, a very great concern.

3. If the members of a church are bound to promote their mutual comfort, then every true christian, who is a member of a church, will by his conduct, afford evidence of his sincerity. A true christian will not be indolent and careless, when he has made a profession of religion. He will be mindful of his covenant with God and with his christian brethren. And it will be his great concern to perform his vows and to discharge his duty.— Such a person, by his conduct, will show that he has not merely a name to live, while he is dead. He will not keep at a distance from the members of the body, to which he belongs. But he will consider and realize, that he and they are one in Christ Jesus.— He will tenderly feel the interests of his brethren. And he will labor to promote their spiritual consolation. By such faithful conduct he will show, that he is a living and active member of the Savior's spiritual body. By such conduct he will maintain and discover evidence of his sincerity in making a profession of religion.

4. If the members of a church are bound to promote their mutu-

al comfort, then every consistent christian will desire to be a member of a church. He will desire to be a member from his regard to the church, and from a regard to his own spiritual interests.— His regard to the church will lead a real christian to desire to be admitted to its fellowship. By joining a church a christian can do much more to promote the comfort of other christians, than he can do while he is not a member of a church. Besides a christian, by joining a church, takes the right method to promote his own comfort in the services and privileges of christian communion. Every true christian, then, will be prompted by his own heart to become a member of a christian church by a public profession of religion.

5. In view of what has been said on this subject, it is evident that christians will always be comforted, when they turn to the proper sources of comfort. The proper sources of comfort to christians are pure, perfect and permanent. The living and true God, as he appears in the gospel of his grace and in the redemption of his people, is the comfort of christians. When they turn to him, they turn to the fountain of consolation and happiness. If they turn from God to earthly vanities, or to any created beings; or if they rely on themselves, or on means, they will experience disappointment and vexation. But when they truly turn to God, they

will find in him abundant and everlasting consolation.

REMARKS ON THE HISTORY OF NAAMAN.

The history of Naaman the Syrian is deeply interesting and instructive. An attentive perusal of it naturally suggests to the contemplative mind reflections, on the wisdom of God, and on the character of man, of a highly practical nature. With the outlines of his history, as recorded in the second book of Kings the reader is supposed to be so familiarly acquainted, as to render a particular statement of them in the introduction, unnecessary.

But, what are some of the most important remarks, which the history of Naaman suggests?

1. By his history we are naturally reminded of the sinful character, and the ruined state, of mankind by nature. "Naaman was a great man with his master, and honorable, because by him the Lord hath given deliverance unto Syria:—he was also a mighty man in valour; *but he was a leper.*" Notwithstanding all his power and honor, and riches, and consequent greatness, he was a leper;—was afflicted with a loathsome, painful disorder; which, had he lived in Israel, would have excluded him from all society; which must have rendered him a burden to himself, and, when fully seated, was incurable by human skill. Naaman was almost as great, as the world

could make him. And yet, we may suppose, that with him the basest of his slaves would not have exchanged conditions. From a consideration of his condition, how natural does the mind recur to the sinful character, and the ruined state, of mankind by nature. No natural object can more strikingly represent the sinful character of all mankind by nature, than a person, who, like Naaman, is deeply affected with the disease of leprosy. In a spiritual sense, the world is full of lepers. The leprosy of sin lies deep within every human heart. Like a subtle virulent poison, it has diffused itself into the most secret recesses of the soul, and has taken entire possession of the whole moral man. In consequence of its poisonous character, there is, by nature, no moral health in him. It excludes the love of God from his heart, and often causes a most furious commotion among the passions of his soul. From his youth up, till he is renewed by the Spirit, it causes "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart to be evil, and only evil continually." It not only reigns supreme in his moral affections, but brings him under the condemning sentence of the violated law—exposes, and justly exposes, him to feel the weight of the wrath of God forever. Such is the leprosy of sin in its genuine nature and tendency. It is its genuine nature and tendency to blight all, that is fair and lovely in creation. It aims directly at

the throne of the Eternal; and would not, if unrestrained, stop its mad career, till it should overturn the moral kingdom of Jehóv-ah, and could brood, with malignant pleasure, over the ruins of a desolated universe.

2. By the history of Naaman we are naturally reminded, that divine wisdom alone is adequate to point out to mankind a method of deliverance from their sinful, ruined state.

Previous to his going to Elisha to be cured of his leprosy, Naaman had unquestionably tried the utmost, that physicians could do for him, but all in vain; and for the reason, that such was his disorder, when thoroughly infused into the system, it bid defiance to human skill. A little Jewish damsel directed him to go to Elisha, and Elisha directed him to go and wash seven times in Jordan, and be clean. There was nothing in the method, that Elisha prescribed, which, in itself, was suited to cure the leprosy. If, at any time *previous* to his going to the prophet, Naaman had dipped himself in Jordan till seventy times seven, there is no reason to suppose, he would thereby have been cured of his leprosy. We must, therefore, conclude, that the method of cure prescribed to him was specially selected by infinite wisdom, for a special occasion, and a special purpose. By the method prescribed, God undoubtedly intended to convince Naaman, that there was, indeed, a God in Israel;

who alone could prescribe to him a method of deliverance from the loathsome disorder, with which he was afflicted. As it was with Naaman in a *natural* respect, so, we have seen, it is with all mankind in a *moral* respect. They are all, by nature, thoroughly infected by the leprosy of sin. As nothing less than divine wisdom could prescribe to Naaman a cure for his painful disorder, so nothing less than infinite wisdom is adequate to point out to mankind a method of deliverance from their sinful state. Mankind have, indeed, in all ages, been attempting to ascertain some method of deliverance from apprehended future evil. Hence, all the superstition, and idolatry, and bloody rites and ceremonies of the heathen world. By these they have attempted to appease the anger of the gods, and to secure personal exemption from expected evil. The most learned heathen philosophers formed various conjectures respecting a future state of existence—respecting the condition of men in that future state—and respecting the method, by which the favour of God might be secured; sometimes fixing on one method, then abandoning it for another, and for others still, in almost endless succession. Respecting all the methods, which human wisdom has devised, for the deliverance of mankind from their fallen state, it may be truly said, that they are absurd, contradictory, and unsatisfactory in the ex-

trement. The truth is, the highest wisdom of men is foolishness with God; and the world, by wisdom, knows not God. *How may sinful man be just with God?* is, therefore a question, which infinite wisdom alone can answer. This question infinite wisdom has *satisfactorily* answered. Through the medium of his holy word, God has informed us, that *he* has found a ransom—that he has laid help on one, who is mighty to save—that he can now be just, and yet the justifier of all penitent believers in Jesus, who, by his sufferings and death has made an atonement sufficient for all mankind. Such is the method of deliverance from their sinful state, which infinite wisdom has prescribed to mankind; and which nothing less than divine wisdom could have devised. It directs the despairing, dying sinner to the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. It assures him, that a fountain has been filled with blood, and directs him to wash in that fountain, and be healed. As the dying Israelite looked up to the brazen serpent, and was healed of his poisonous wound, the method of salvation devised by infinite wisdom, and into which angels desire to look, directs the sinner, divested of his self-righteousness, to look up to the cross, repent, believe, be forgiven and be happy forever.

3. By the history of Naaman, we are naturally reminded, that, with the method of deliverance from their sinful state, which in-

finite wisdom has devised, mankind are naturally displeased. With the simple direction of Elisha—"Go, and wash in Jordan seven times"—Naaman was highly displeased. "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus?" he exclaimed, "better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? Behold I thought, he will surely come out to me, and stand, and call upon the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand on the place, and recover the leper. So he turned and went away in a rage." He desired to be cured as a person of consequence. The method prescribed by the prophet he regarded as too common, too plain, and too cheap for so great a man as he to be cured by—did not believe, that it would effect a cure—or, if it would, that he might as well be plunged in the rivers of Damascus, as in the waters of Israel. "So he turned and went away in a rage." His conduct is a striking exemplification of the conduct of sinners, when urged to avail themselves of the method of deliverance from their sinful state, which is prescribed by the gospel. This method strikes at the root of all their depravity, pride, and boasted self-righteousness. It requires them, stripped of all their self-righteousness, and relying solely on divine grace, to come as poor beggars—to plead for mercy solely on account of what their Lord and Saviour has done and suffered.

and believingly to accept offered mercy through him. Against this method of salvation their hearts rebel. When it is clearly described to them, they are often greatly offended. Inform them plainly, that they cannot be justified by the deeds of the law; that they cannot be saved, on account of any thing, they have done, or can do, as the ground of their forgiveness, and they are often disposed to turn and go away in a rage. They desire to be saved in such a manner, that they may, in the end, be able to ascribe the glory of their salvation to themselves. They cannot endure the thought of casting all their boasted talents and learning perhaps, and all their fancied personal worthiness, at the foot of the cross, and of relying exclusively upon what another has done and suffered for deliverance from condemnation.

All this our Saviour plainly discovered, when he was with sinners upon earth. Hence he said to them explicitly—"Ye *will not come* unto me, that ye might have life." For the same reason, when, at the present day, they are urged and entreated to avail themselves of the provisions of the gospel, their hearts often rise in opposition to its holy, humbling demands, and in their thoughts at least, "they all, with one consent, begin to make excuse." The language of their hearts is—"Is not the way, we have prescribed for ourselves, better, than the one you have described? May we not pur-

sue our own chosen way, and be saved? "So, they turn, and go away in a rage." But,

4. By the history of Naaman, we are reminded, that the directions of the gospel must be strictly followed. Naaman, it seems, was favored with prudent, faithful, affectionate servants. After he had turned from Elisha, and gone away in a rage, they "came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? how much rather, then, when he saith unto thee, Wash and be clean. Then he went down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child and he was clean."

Had Naaman persisted in refusing to comply with the directions of the prophet, there is no reason to believe, his leprosy would ever have been cleansed. This fact forcibly reminds us, that, if sinners would be cleansed of the leprosy of sin, which has diffused itself throughout their moral system; if they would be delivered from their state of condemnation, they must strictly comply with the directions of that method of salvation, which divine wisdom has devised. Divesting themselves of all dependance upon self-righteousness, and becoming sensible, that, in a moral respect, they are miserable, and wretched, and poor, and blind, and naked, they must exercise

unfeigned sorrow for their sins, and penitently and believingly cast themselves upon the mercy of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.— Let them do this; forgiveness—salvation—eternal blessedness, will be theirs. Let them continue to refuse till death, to comply with the requisitions of the gospel; under the dominion of sinful affection and the condemnation of the violated law they will forever irrecoverably remain. F.

THE INSTRUCTION PARENTS SHOULD
GIVE THEIR CHILDREN.

The religious instruction, which parents ought to give their children, is more extensive than is generally supposed. The bare speaking about religion, now and then, is not giving children that religious instruction, which God has enjoined upon parents. To remind and instruct are two things. To instruct upon any subject, is to exhibit some light upon it.— Parents ought to exhibit religious truth to the minds of their children, in order to instruct them in the knowledge of religion. The instruction, which they ought to give their children, consists of two branches.

In the first place, they ought to instruct them in the doctrines of religion. All religion is founded in truth. And the fundamental truths of religion ought to be clearly laid open to the minds of children, as soon as they are ca-

pable of understanding them.— And this is very early. The first principles of religion are very easy to be understood by those, who have imbibed no prejudices against them. What is more easy to be understood than that there is a God, who made all things, who upholds all things, who governs all things, who loves the good and hates the bad, who will reward the righteous and punish the wicked? Children can very easily understand and realize the idea of their creator, their preserver, their benefactor, and their supreme and final judge. Let parents only turn the attention of their children to the sun, moon and stars, and the great objects of creation; and they will soon impress on their minds the belief of a holy, an all-seeing and heart-searching God, who will make them happy or miserable forever, according to their conduct in this life. And this impression, once made upon their minds, will continually strengthen as their capacities enlarge, and their knowledge increases. Every year, and, indeed, every day will tend to exhibit clearer and clearer evidence, that they are the creatures of God, in whom they live and move and have their being. When parents have taught their children that there is a God, to whom they are accountable for all their actions, it will be easy to make them believe that the Bible is his holy word, which they are under sacred obligations to read and

obey. This is a most important article of parental instruction. It is not to be expected, that children will reverence the Bible, before they are really convinced that it came from God, and is clothed with divine authority.—No other people in the world ever treated the Bible with so much veneration and solemnity as the Jews. They never took up, nor laid down the law, without manifesting peculiar respect and awe to the lawgiver. Children ought to be taught to treat the Bible as the word of God; and never read it nor speak of it, as a common book. Nor is it difficult to make children revere and treat the Bible as the word of God. Precept and example will soon impress this truth upon their minds; so that they will not dare to trifle with the word of life, nor treat the scriptures of truth with levity or contempt. And when parents have gained these two points, to make their children believe, that there is a great and glorious God, and that the Bible is his holy word, they may then easily teach them the most essential and important doctrines of divine revelation. These are level to the lowest capacity. A child may understand the doctrine of the divine purposes; that God formed all his designs before he made the world; that he governs the world just as he always intended to govern it; that he determined to save sinners by the death of Christ; that all men are sinners and need salvation; that they cannot be saved without becoming penitent and holy; that they are dependent upon God to make them holy and happy; that all, who are penitent and holy, will go to heaven; and all, that are finally impenitent and unholy, will go to hell. These great and essential truths are to be taught and explained to children, before any false and erroneous sentiments have crept into their minds. It is just as necessary thus to indoctrinate children, to make them religious, as to indoctrinate a Jew or a heathen, to make them embrace the gospel. There is no more reason to expect that God will renew the hearts of children, who are to grow up, before they are in some measure acquainted with divine truth, than that he will convert a Jew or pagan, without any knowledge of the gospel. True religion is the same thing in children as in the adult. It consists in love to divine truth. Hence the first branch of religious instruction to be given to children, respects the doctrines of the Bible. The same words, which God taught parents among his ancient people, they were to teach their children. “And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children.” Parents are to begin to teach the doctrines of religion, as soon as they are capable

of understanding them, and to continue to instruct them as long as they remain children, or until they arrive to manhood and cease to be under their care. They are to teach the same doctrines to their children, which God has taught them and commanded them to believe, to love, and to teach. This leads me to observe, in the next place, that parents ought to teach their children the duties as well as the doctrines of religion. Children cannot understand the duties, which they ought to perform, until they understand the doctrines upon which these duties are founded. But as soon as they understand the doctrines of religion, then they are capable of feeling their moral obligations to perform the duties, which result from them. When children are made to believe there is a God, and that they are his sinful, guilty, perishing creatures, whom he has sent his Son to save; then they are prepared to receive instruction respecting the duty, which they owe to God, to their parents and to their fellow-men. Parents ought, first of all, to teach their children the duties, which they owe to God. These are summarily contained in the first and great command in the law: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy might." As soon as children are taught to know, that God is, and that he is a most great, and glorious, and amiable being, they may be made to feel,

that they ought to love him sincerely and supremely. And being convinced of this, they can readily feel their obligation to pray to their Father, who is in heaven, to repent of their sins against him and to trust in his mercy for forgiveness and salvation. It is easy to make children know how they ought to feel and conduct towards God. And it is a sense of their obligations to him, that lays the broadest foundation for feeling their other obligations. In view of the character and authority of God, it is easy for parents to make their children feel, that they ought to love, revere and obey them. It is sufficient to tell them, that God has commanded them to "honor their father and mother." This will strike them with awe, when they know and acknowledge, that God is their creator and judge, who will call them to an account for all their conduct. It is of great importance that parents should instruct their children into the knowledge of their duty towards them. They should make them feel, that it is God, who commands their obedience to their parents. Children, as well as men, are extremely prone to disregard all human authority. And when they imagine, that they are bound by no other authority than that of their parents, they will, if possible, trample upon it. Hence it becomes parents, when they exercise authority over their children, especially when they enforce it by

correction, to show them, that God has expressly commanded them to exercise and enforce authority over them and commanded them to obey and submit.— There is no other means, that will so powerfully establish parental authority in the minds of children. No child can stand before it. Let the parent convince the child, that God commands him to treat him as he does and the child will feel irresistible conviction, that he ought to obey parental authority and submit to it. It is an important part of parental instruction to teach children the nature and obligation of parental authority.— And when children are taught to treat their heavenly Father and their earthly parents as they ought to do, they may be easily taught how to treat all their fellow men. For God has revealed his will respecting their conduct towards all their superiors, inferiors and equals. And the same spirit of love to God and love to their parents and of duty to both, will lead them to respect all their fellow men and treat them as becomes the gospel. The child, that is taught to fear God and obey his parents, will naturally feel his obligation to respect all persons and regard the good of all with whom he is connected or conversant.

Thus parents ought to teach their children all that God has taught them. They ought to inculcate the same doctrines and the same duties of religion upon their children, which God has enjoined

upon themselves. This is properly *religious instruction* and essentially different from teaching the rules of decency, propriety, or what is called good manners.— Parents should teach their children to do every thing heartily as unto the Lord and not unto men; or to act upon religious principles and not upon the maxims and customs of the world. They should train them up in the way, in which they should go and from which they should not depart, in order to glorify God and enjoy him for ever. They should teach them to live a holy, devout and heavenly life, which will prepare them for a peaceful death and for a blessed and glorious immortality.

RESH.

SINNERS MAY BE SAVED IF THEY WILL.

Notwithstanding all that has been done for sinful and ruined men, it seems to be the opinion of many that obstacles still lie in their path to life and glory, which they are utterly unable to surmount. A brief attempt will be made to show the incorrectness of this opinion, which is so dangerous to immortal souls.

The salvation of the gospel includes deliverance from sin itself, and from the endless torments of hell, the just wages of sin, recovery to holiness, and the enjoyment of everlasting happiness in heaven. That sinners may obtain this holy and gracious salva-

tion if they will, the subsequent remarks, it is believed, will evince.

An ample atonement has been made for sinners. They could not be pardoned, and hence could not be saved without an atonement which should fully express God's abhorrence of sin, vindicate the honor of his violated law, and maintain the rights of his government. Such an atonement was necessary on God's account, i. e. was necessary, that he might extend pardoning mercy to the guilty, consistently with his moral rectitude, with his pure and holy character, with his all perfect reign. And such an atonement has been made by the Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to scripture, is both God and man, or in whose person both divinity and humanity are mysteriously united. This wonderful Being has shed his blood upon the cross, without the shedding of which there could be no remission of sins. The scriptures teach that he was set forth by his Father to be a propitiation, to declare God's righteousness, that he might be just in justifying or pardoning such as believe.—The atonement which Christ has made by his death, is universal ; for it is said expressly, that he died for all, tasted death for every man, and is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world. The atonement being made by such a personage as Jesus Christ, is ample, is all-sufficient. It fully declares or displays God's righteousness and justice in the pardon

of sin. The way, then, is completely opened for sinners to come and be saved if they will.

This appears also from the universality and freeness of the gospel offer. All sinners without exception, to whom the gospel is sent, are in it invited to come and be saved. The invitations are alike addressed to the learned and the ignorant, the rich and the poor, the high and the low, the bond and the free. To them all Christ says, "Come ; for all things are now ready. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth. Salvation is not only offered to all who live under the sound of the gospel, but is offered to all gratuitously. This is the language in which it is offered ; "Ho ! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters ; and he that hath no money ; come ye buy and eat ; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price. The Spirit and the bride say, come. And let him that heareth say, come. And let him that is athirst, come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

That sinners may be saved if they will, is also evident from the consideration, that God is perfectly willing to bestow salvation upon all who will come to him in the appointed way for the offered blessing. This is a plain conclusion from the preceding remarks.—For surely, he would not invite sinners to come and be saved, if he were unwilling to receive such

as come, or to grant them pardoning and saving mercy. God is sincere in all his offers and invitations to sinners. How solemn, and impressive, and convincing is this declaration of the Most High! "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?" How often does God urge and entreat sinners to come and be saved! How many solemn promises does he make to save all who do come in the way prescribed! And Christ expressly declares, that he who cometh to him shall in no wise be cast out, and that every one who asketh receiveth. What then is there to prevent sinners from being saved if they will? They do indeed sometimes say that God is unwilling to save them. But in saying this, they virtually charge him with insincerity and duplicity. God not only expresses in words his perfect willingness to save all who look to him for salvation, but proves that his words are true, proves that he means as he says, by all the great things he has done for sinners, and by all his conduct towards them from the fall to the present hour.

In proof of the point under consideration, I add, that sinners are able to do all that is required of them, in order to be saved. They cannot, indeed, obtain salvation, unless they do comply with the terms on which it is offered. They

must love God supremely. They must repent of sin. They must believe in Christ. They must deny themselves. And they must persevere in holiness to the end of life. These things they must do, or they cannot be saved. But these things they are not unable to do. What can be easier than to love a being of boundless excellence and glory? What can be easier than to hate and renounce sin, the most evil, hateful, destructive thing in the universe? What path can be found so smooth, and pleasant, and easy to pursue, as the path of wisdom, the path of holiness? That sinners have power to do what is required, and what is so easy, God himself has decided, where he commands them to love him with all their strength, and promises life to those who do this. If God required sinners to love him with more strength than they have, in order to their being saved, then they could not be saved; for it is impossible in the nature of things, either for sinners, or saints, or angels, ever to love him with *more* than all their strength. But the fact that God bids sinners love him with all their strength, proves to a demonstration that they have strength to love him; for surely he would not speak of their having strength or power, if they had none. And the fact that God neither requires sinners to love him nor to do any thing else beyond their strength or power, in order to be saved, proves with equal clearness that they are not

unable to obtain salvation. However unwilling they may be to comply with the terms of salvation, it is certain that a compliance with these terms does not transcend their natural ability or power, be that power more or less. There is, therefore, nothing aside from their own wills, aside from their own free voluntary exercises, that ever does or ever can prevent their being saved. It appears, then, from the extent and magnitude of the atonement, from the universality and freeness of the gospel offers and invitations, from the willingness of God and Christ to save those who do come, and from the fact that sinners are able to comply with the terms on which salvation is offered to them, it appears from these considerations, that they may be saved if they will. And it is true with application to them all, that if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted, according to that they have, and not according to that they have not.

May sinners, then, be saved if they will? Hence we see how groundless are all their excuses and pleas for not complying with the terms on which salvation is tendered to them. Where the gospel is faithfully preached, sinners, when urged to repent, believe and be saved, plead the decrees of God, the election of God, and the sovereignty of God, as so many bars in their way. And they plead their entire dependance on God for a new heart, and that

repentance, faith and salvation are the gifts of God; and hence that they are utterly unable to obtain them. All these and similar excuses sinners often urge, to justify themselves for continuing in sin, to pacify their consciences, and to cast the blame, if possible, off from themselves, and fix it upon God. But though the doctrines that have been named are all true, yet all the excuses which sinners draw from those precious, glorious truths, are entirely groundless; for it has been proved, I trust, that there is nothing out of themselves, nothing aside from their own choice, to prevent their repentance and salvation. That all the pleas they ever urge on this subject, are vain, will be seen at once; if we only consider the case of such as are convinced. If sinners in this world ever know and feel the truth respecting God and themselves, it is when they are thoroughly convinced; for what is conviction, but strong and vivid impressions of divine truth on the mind? I ask the reader, then, whether you ever saw any sinners, who, when under deep conviction, were able to make any of those excuses which are so often made by the stupid, or by the merely thoughtful and awakened? And I am sure you will answer, no. The truth is, that sinners under pungent conviction, do see the fallacy of all the pleas that either they or others ever made for continuing impenitent. They know that such pleas are refuges of lies, and that

the making of them is only adding sin to sin. And they know, too, that nothing in the universe prevents their salvation, but what lies in their own sinful, rebellious stubborn hearts, which are strongly opposed to God and Christ, and that their opposition is chosen, is voluntary. Hence their mouths are shut. The light of truth shines, with such brightness, into their understandings and consciences, that they are compelled to give up all their former pleas, and to mention them no more.—Sinners hate the nature of Christ's holy and self-denying religion.—They hate the nature of his pure, and spiritual, and gracious salvation. The way of sin in which they walk, is the way of their choice, and they love the road to death. They are impenitent, because they love to be impenitent. They live in unbelief and disobedience, because they love to live in them. And they are at enmity with God, and Christ, and truth, and holiness, because they love to be at enmity with them. The only reason then, that any sinners are not saved, is, they are unwilling to be saved on gospel terms. This voluntary opposition and enmity of their hearts, and nothing else, prevents their becoming the friends of God, the followers of his Son, the heirs of his salvation.

May sinners be saved if they will? Then, they who are finally lost will have no reason to complain of the divine conduct towards them. If salvation is free-

ly offered to them, and they are able to obtain it, but miss of it through their own voluntary rejection of it, what ground can they have for complaint? They will have, they can have, none. On the contrary, the lost will forever have great reason to bless God for giving his son to die for them, for all his gracious offers which were made to them, and for all his countless mercies which were bestowed upon them during their state of trial. And I add, they will be forever bound to love and praise him in view of all the bright displays of his justice in their destruction. Though their hearts will be full of complaints and of enmity against him, yet their reason and conscience will be on his side, and will approve of his conduct towards them to all eternity. And when they sink into the pit of endless despair, they will be compelled to own that they sink there justly. Even the saints, the heirs of salvation, feel assured that were they themselves doomed to suffer endless punishment, no injustice would be done to them; for they know that they deserve the awful destruction from which they are delivered. It is not because saints are by nature any less sinful, or less rebellious, or less obstinate than others, that they in distinction from others are saved; but it is because God, agreeably to his eternal purpose, has made them willing in the day of his power to comply with the easy, condescending and gracious,

but self-denying terms of the gospel ; and causes them to love him, to submit to his holy will, and to rejoice in his glorious reign. And it depends solely on his sovereign pleasure who and how many of our fallen race shall become truly reconciled to him and be saved.— This, however, is certain, that he hath chosen as many to salvation, as it will be for his glory and the good of the universe to save ; and that as many as he has ordained to eternal life, notwithstanding their native unwillingness, will repent, believe and live, to the praise of the glory of his free, sovereign, discriminating grace. Sinners however, are prone to imagine that they are already willing enough to be saved. But were they sensible that the salvation of the gospel is a holy salvation, and that to seek it is to seek deliverance from sin, and to hunger and thirst after righteousness, they would perceive at once their mistake ; for they know that they do love sin and hate holiness. No sinner is ever truly willing to be saved, until he is “ born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” Still there is great propriety in calling upon sinners to seek salvation, since they may have it if they will. Were they unable to obtain the blessing, it would be unreasonable and cruel to bid them seek it. Yet as they are not unable, but only unwilling to become sharers in the salvation of God, it is highly proper to bid them come

and receive it at his hand. God commands and even entreats them to do it. Christ commands and entreats them, and orders his ministers to persuade and beseech them to do it. And unless they do give up their voluntary, unreasonable, criminal opposition to him, and come with the gospel temper, and take the water of life freely, they must be shut out of heaven forever, they must be deprived of all its pure and imperishable joys, and be punished with everlasting destruction from his presence, and from the glory of his power. THEOPHILUS.

SUCCESS OF MISSIONS.

No. IV.

Mission at the Islands in the South Seas.

The London Missionary Society was formed in 1795. A mission to the islands of the South Seas was the first object that claimed their attention, and engaged their efforts. On the 28th of July, 1796, thirty Missionaries were designated to the important work of planting the gospel of Jesus Christ in the midst of those remote seas. They embarked on the 10th of August and arrived at Otaheite, after a pleasant and prosperous voyage, on the 6th of March, 1797. The original objects of the voyage were to establish Christian Missions in Otaheite, the Friendly Islands, the Marquesas, the Sandwich and the Pelew Islands. The

two latter islands were relinquished and the missionaries were stationed *eighteen* at Otaheite, *ten* on one of the Friendly Islands, and one, on one of the Marquesas. The two latter stations, owing to the intestine commotions of the islands and the ferocity of some of their inhabitants, were terminated within two years. But the station at Otaheite has been attended with more auspicious results. With some interruptions from the frequent insurrections of the islanders, the missionaries pursued their labours. They travelled around the island, and preached to thousands of the natives; some of whom gave them an attentive hearing, but the greater part treated their message with levity and disregard. Pomare, the king was their steady friend and protector. They continued to labour with unwearied assiduity for several years, without any apparent success, or encouragement, except what arose from the hope that a silent influence was operating, which would, at length, become apparent by its eternal effects. But they continued under every discouragement to preach the gospel in different parts of the island. After seven years' labour, one of the missionaries writes to the directors as follows; "Instructions continue to be given to the inhabitants of Otaheite in the things of God, but apparently none are savingly profited by them; they seem to remain gross idolaters, enemies to God by wicked works, without

God, without hope; yet it must be confessed that very many of them have obtained a considerable, though as yet unsanctified knowledge of the doctrines of christianity." Upon which the directors of that period thus remarked. "We cannot but hope that where a number of poor heathens born and educated in total ignorance of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Saviour, obtain a considerable knowledge of the doctrines of christianity, the seed of life may be considered as already sown, and a just expectation indulged that the harvest will one day bless the eyes of the labourers and of the Society." How just were these anticipations will be seen from the result. Soon after, a civil war broke out between King Pomare and a party of his subjects, who wished to deprive him of his authority, in consequence of which, the missionaries were driven from the island. The rebels burnt the houses of the missionaries, destroyed their gardens, and seized all the society's property which could not be hastily removed by the missionaries. In consequence of these calamitous events, and the gloomy prospects before them, the missionaries (excepting two) concluded to sail for Port Jackson. They had not remained there long before they ardently desired to resume their labour in the South Sea Islands. In the mean time Pomare wrote to them expressing his deepest sorrow at their absence, and affectionately

entreating them to come back. The missionaries being also informed that peace was established and Pomare's authority restored, five of them returned and resumed their labours. The king continued to manifest his friendship for them until July 1812, when he declared to them his full conviction of the truths of the gospel, and his determination to worship Jehovah as the only living and true God. He had before cast away his idols, he now became a practical believer. "He regularly observed the Sabbath, entertained clear and consistent views of the doctrines of the gospel, expressed the deepest contrition for his past wickedness, and laboured to persuade his relatives to embrace christianity. This was very encouraging to the missionaries. During the two next years, the fruits of the divine blessing on the labours of the missionaries became more and more conspicuous, so that in their report of 1814, they say that *fifty* had renounced their idols and become the worshipers of Jehovah. This was on Eimeo. About the same time there seemed to be a spirit of inquiry on Otaheite and some there renounced their idolatry. On both these and on some of the neighbouring islands, the congregations increased and the number of those who renounced heathenism, and became the professed worshipers of the true God, multiplied continually. The priest in the district where the missionaries re-

sided renounced idolatry and publicly committed his god to the flames. His example was soon followed in both of the Islands, and not only were idols cast into the fire, but their places of idolatrous worship and altars were destroyed, and "even the wood, of which they were composed, used to dress common food, of which different classes and both sexes partook indiscriminately at a common meal, in utter disregard of prohibitions and customs, rendered powerful by the united influence of superstition and antiquity." The mission continued to flourish greatly.—Without spending time to mention in detail the many occurrences and events which were favorable to the progress of the work, we hasten to the joyful result of the indefatigable labors of these persevering missionaries.

In the course of the next year, just nineteen years from the time the missionaries sailed from England, idolatry was entirely abolished both in Otaheite and Eimeo, and these together with some smaller Islands, became by the blessing of God, altogether *Christian Islands*. Their idols were destroyed, human sacrifices and infant murders abolished, and the people were every where earnestly calling upon the missionaries to come and instruct them in the knowledge of the christian religion. Places for the public worship of the true God had been erected and were erecting in every district, and where there

were no missionaries to conduct public worship, the natives had prayer meetings among themselves.

Although this change was at last sudden, operating through the whole of these Islands nearly at the same time, yet it was not an inconsiderate change. To use the language of the directors of the society, "The harvest which at length has proved so rapid and complete, sprang from seed that had long been diligently, patiently, copiously, and generally sown among them. The Otaheiteans for twelve years had opportunity of closely observing the nature of practical christianity as exemplified by the missionaries, and during most of that time, its doctrines had been explained, and urged upon their attention, in every district of the Island. In declaring themselves christians therefore, they well know what they profess to believe, and what kind of conduct they bind themselves to observe." From the effects produced upon the natives we have every reason to suppose the change a real one which will be permanently salutary. With their idolatry the people have renounced their former system of thinking and acting—an evident reformation of manners has taken place, their vain and indecent amusements are almost entirely laid aside, and a degree of domestic and social intercourse is enjoyed to which formerly they were entire strangers. A desire for knowledge is universally plant-

ed among the natives, and at least three thousand of them are supplied with books. The way is opened for civilization, to the introduction of the useful arts and to the cultivation of the earth. How great the success, and how incalculable the benefits of this mission. "On several occasions the mission seemed on the verge of ruin—the lights which had long shone dimly, repeatedly appeared to be nearly extinct—but, under the good providence of the Almighty and his gracious influence, it has at length burst out into a far brighter day, than the missionaries ever anticipated." Their benevolent and persevering efforts have been at last rewarded by the conversion of a whole people, from a religion of the most barbarous and dreadful description, polluted by frequent human sacrifices, to an adoption of the mild precepts of christianity. And the consequent change in their social and moral character is most extraordinary.

This change is described by Messrs. Tyerman and Bennet in a letter to the American Board, dated August 9th, 1822. These gentlemen visited the islands as the representatives of the London Missionary Society. Under every advantage arising from a particular view of the islands and a personal intercourse with their inhabitants they write, under the above date, the following paragraph with which we shall close this number.

"Having spent some time in the South Sea Islands, it may not be unacceptable to you to receive our views of the state of religion in those highly favored regions.— You have, no doubt, read the reports which have been made respecting the state of that mission; —and be assured, that so far from those reports being exaggerated, much more might have been said. The work is indeed marvellous in our eyes, and excites in our hearts the most lively gratitude to that God whose hand has been so signally displayed in it. The inhabitants of those Islands were sunk into the lowest possible state of moral degradation; but are now we hesitate not to say, viewing them as a body the most universally and consistently christian of any people upon the face of the earth. The sabbath is universally regarded. The individual is scarcely known who does not attend public worship three times on the Sabbath day and several times in the week. The congregations are large and as well behaved as any congregation we ever saw in En-

gland. Numerous churches are formed of pious persons; while multitudes are waiting for admission. Full three fourths of the people can read, and many write and cypher. Industry is every where apparent and civilization has already made considerable progress. Towns are rising up composed of houses built according to the European style. Our furniture is imitated, and the people aim at the same modes of living and clothing. Crimes are very few. Peace and happiness are every where apparent. The marriage vow is held sacred. Infanticide is wholly discontinued. Religion is the great business of life, while secular affairs though not neglected are held as only secondary.— All the food wanted for the Sabbath is dressed on Saturday: not a fire is lighted, nor a canoe is seen moving on the water, nor are any visits paid on the Lord's day. Never did the gospel obtain a more complete and glorious triumph over ignorance, and sensuality, and superstition, since the world began." W.

EXTRACTS.

DEATH OF VOLTAIRE.

It was during Voltaire's last visit to Paris, when his triumph was complete, and he had even feared that he should die with glory, amidst the acclamations of an infat-

uated theatre, that he was struck with the hand of Providence, and fated to make a very different termination of his career.

In the midst of his triumphs, a violent hemorrhage raised appe-

hensions for his life. D. Alembert, Diderot, and Marmontel, hastened to support his resolution in his last moments, but were only witnesses to their mutual ignominy as well as to his own.

Here let not the Historian fear exaggeration, rage, remorse, reproach, and blasphemy, all accompany, and characterize the long agony of the dying Atheist.

His death, the most terrible that is ever recorded to have stricken the impious man, will not be denied by his companions in impiety. Their silence, however much they may wish to deny it, is the least of those corroborative proofs which could be adduced. Not one of the sophisters has ever dared to mention any sign given of resolution or tranquility by the premier chief, during the space of three months which elapsed from the time he was crowned in the theatre until his decease. Such a silence expresses how great their humiliation was in his death.

It was in his return from the theatre, and in the midst of the toils, he was resuming, in order to acquire fresh applause, that Voltaire was warned that the long career of his impiety was drawing to an end.

In spite of all the sophisters flocking around him in the first days of his illness, he gave signs of wishing to return to the God whom he had so long blasphemed. He called for the priests who ministered to him whom he had

sworn to crush, under the appellation of the *wretch*.*

His danger increasing, he wrote the following note to the Abbe Gaultier :

“ You had promised me, Sir, to come and hear me, I entreat that you would take the trouble of calling as soon as possible,

(Signed,) VOLTAIRE.”

Paris, 26th Feb. 1777.

A few days after he wrote the following declaration, in presence of the same Abbe Gaultier, the Abbe Mignot, and the Marquis de Villevieille, copied from the minutes deposited with M. Moinet, Notary, at Paris.

“ I, the under written, declare that for these 4 days past, having been afflicted with a vomiting of blood, at the age of eighty-four, and not having been able to drag myself to the church, the Reverend, the Rector of Saint Sulpice, having been pleased to add to his good works that of sending to me the Abbe Gaultier, a priest, I confessed to him; and if it pleases God to dispose of me, I die in the Holy Catholic Church, in which I was born; hoping that the divine mercy will deign to pardon all my faults. If ever I have scandalized the Church, I ask pardon of God and of the Church.

(Signed,) VOLTAIRE.

March 2, 1778.

In presence of the Abbe Mignot, my nephew; and the Marquis de Villevieille, my friend.”

After the two witnesses had

signed this declaration, Voltaire added these words, copied from the same minutes.

“The Abbe Gaultier, my confessor, having apprized me that it was said among a certain set of people, ‘I should protest against every thing that I did at my death,’ I declare that I never made such a speech, and that it is an old jest, attributed long since to many of the learned, more enlightened than I am.”

Was this declaration a fresh instance of his former hypocrisy? for he had the mean hypocrisy, even in the midst of his efforts against christianity, to receive the Sacrament regularly, and to do other acts of religion, merely to be able to deny his infidelity, if accused of it. After the explanations we have unfortunately seen him give of his exterior acts of religion, might there not be room for doubt. Be that as it may, there is a public homage paid to that religion in which he declared he meant to die, notwithstanding his having perpetually conspired against it during his life. This declaration is also signed by the same friend and adept the Marquis de Villevieille, to whom eleven years ago, Voltaire was wont to write, “Conceal your march from your enemy in your endeavours to crush the wretch!”

Voltaire had permitted this declaration to be carried to the Rector of St. Sulpice, and to the Archbishop of Paris, to know whether it would be sufficient. When the

Abbe Gaultier returned with the answer, it was impossible for him to gain admittance to the patient. The conspirators had strained every nerve to hinder the chief from consummating his reconciliation, and every avenue was shut to the priest, whom Voltaire himself had sent for. The demons haunted every access; rage succeeded to fury, and fury to rage again during the remainder of his life.

Then it was that D. Alembert, Diderot, and about twenty others of the conspirators, who had beset his apartment, never approached him but to witness their own infamy. He would often curse them, and exclaim, “Retire! it is you that have brought me to my present state. Begone! I could have done without you all; but you could not exist without me. And what a wretched glory have ye produced for me?”

Then would succeed the horrid remembrance of his conspiracy. They could hear him, the prey of anguish and dread, alternately supplicating or blaspheming that God whom he had conspired against, and in plaintive accents he would cry out, “Oh Christ! Oh Jesus Christ;” and then complain that he was abandoned by God and man. The hand which had traced in ancient writ the sentence of an impious and reviling king, seemed to trace before his eyes, *crush then, do crush the wretch*. In vain he turned his head away; the time was coming apace, when he was to appear before the tribunal of

him whom he had blasphemed; and his physicians, especially M. Tronchin, calling in to administer relief, thunderstruck, retired, *declaring the death of the impious man to be terrible indeed.* The pride of the conspirators would willingly have suppressed these declarations, but it was in vain. The Marshal of Richelieu flies from the bed side declaring it to be too terrible to be sustained; and M. Tronchin, that *the furies of Orcestes could give but a faint idea of those of Voltaire.*

ABBE BARUEL.

*It is well known that Voltaire had been accustomed for many years to call our blessed Saviour *The Wretch, l'Infame* whom he vowed to crush. The conclusion of many of his letters is in these words—*Ecraser l'Infame—Crush the wretch.*

LETTER FROM THOMAS HOPOO TO REV.
HERMAN DAGGETT.

From the New Haven Religious Intelligencer.

Kiruah, (Owhyhee,) Dec. 22, 1823.

To my much loved and reverend Father, who taught me to know Jesus Christ, the God of heaven. Great is my affection towards you, my best friend in America; but greater is my love to Jesus, who is in heaven. I remember and regard what you said to me, when I was at your house; 'Thomas, be patient, be faithful, be much in prayer to God, that your benighted countrymen may be saved by Jehovah.'

Jehovah has heard our prayers to him, that this land of darkness might be enlightened by him, and that this people might know the salvation of Jesus Christ. I am here patiently, and I hope faithfully, laboring among them, and teaching them the Gospel of salvation, that their souls may be quickened by Jesus from the dust of sin and death.

It rejoices my heart very much, to speak often to them about the salvation of Jesus Christ, that they also may behold the glory of Jehovah, the everlasting God. Is there any other business of life so good and so great as this? No: there is no other service like that of Jesus Christ our Lord. Through him we must be saved: through him we shall arrive at heaven: there we shall see his glory, in the kingdom of his Father.

I am here, on Owhyhee, diligently publishing the word of God to the people, that they may understand the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of men. I was at Woahoo some time, teaching the palapala (reading and writing) to the people of one of the chiefs. After this, I was sent to Owhyhee by the missionaries, to teach Kuakini, (or Governor Adams, as he is sometimes called,) the principal chief on the island, and to teach his people, the men, and the women, and the children of Kiruah.

I had been on Owhyhee a little more than a year, when Mr. Thurston arrived at Kiruah, with his

family. The governor of Owhyhee has built a meeting-house at Kiruah, and on the tenth of this month, it was solemnly dedicated to the worship of Jehovah. On this interesting occasion, the Rev. Mr. Thurston preached from this text—Haggai 1: 7, 8. “Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Consider your ways. Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the Lord.”

All the chiefs of these islands are pleased with Mr. Thurston, because he preaches to them the good word of God. He is very faithful and diligent in telling the people about the great God of heaven. He is a very good preacher in the language of Owhyhee, and points out to us the straight and narrow way, that our souls may arrive at heaven, through Jesus Christ. He is the only minister on Owhyhee, at the present time. The governor likes Mr. Thurston, because he understands the native language; and he also speaks it almost as well as one of the people.

In a few days, I expect to commence a school in the native language. Some already know how to read and write. The number of my scholars, at Kiruah, the last year, was 120. By and by, I shall have 40 more scholars at Kiruah, which will make 160. There is one of my scholars, who, I think, is born again. His name is Kelou, or Kamakau.—He is a chief, and

lives at Kaawaroa Bay, at the place where Captain Cooke was killed. I have instructed him in the word of God. By and by, perhaps, he will be a minister. He is a good chief. He prays continually to God for you all, who live in the Christian land, that you may all be saved through Jesus Christ.

I will tell you something about the governor of Owhyhee. His desires after God are not very great. By and by, perhaps, he will turn his thoughts to Jesus. I pray with him and his family every night and morning. He wrote to Mr. Thurston, to send Thomas to pray with him, that he might be saved through Jesus Christ. I think also that Kapiolani, a chief woman of Owhyhee, loves God, and loves Jesus Christ. She is continually hoping to go to heaven through Jesus Christ.

My old father too, loves the Lord Jesus Christ. He thinks much about the great God. He rejoices at the thoughts of going to heaven when he dies. Jesus Christ is the continual object of his desires. He thinks about him by night and by day. He is almost the only object of his heart's desire, in these his last days. He wants very much to go to Jesus in heaven, that he may quickly see the glory of Jehovah. I am satisfied that he finds evidence of piety in his own heart; and I rejoice also that he has found Jesus. I call on my friends to rejoice with me.

By and by, the eyes, and limbs, and bones, of the missionaries will be worn out, in labouring for the good of this people. By and by, perhaps, the people of these islands will go before some of the people in America, who have the Gospel and believe it not. Perhaps they will get to heaven, and leave some of you behind. What will become of you, if you do not love Jesus, when the great day of judgment shall come, when Jesus shall come in the clouds of heaven, with his angels! What will you do then? What will you say? Lord Jesus, have mercy on the unbelievers in America.

Mr. and Mrs. Thurston send their kind regards to Mr. and Mrs. Daggett, wishing to be prayerfully remembered, with their little ones.

I am yours, the same as ever,
THOMAS HOPOO.

AN AGED SINNER'S ADVICE.

"Quench not the Spirit."

"My children," said the old man, "few are the words of your dying father. I wish them to sink deep into your hearts." Then raising himself a little in his bed with a degree of strength which he had not been able to command for several of the last weeks of his sickness, he proceeded.

"When young I enjoyed religious privileges and was the subject of occasional serious reflection.—When just entering my 16th year, religious impressions were made

on my mind with unusual force.—I seemed to hear a voice continually saying to me *seek religion now*. I was unhappy; my former amusements lost their relish. Still I was not willing wholly to relinquish them, and obey the voice which urged me to seek religion immediately. One day, after much reflection, I deliberately promised to God that as soon as the season of youthful amusement was past, I would give myself to religious pursuits. My anxieties immediately left me; I returned to my amusements and the whole subject was soon forgotten.

"When at twenty-five, the monitory voice returned, reminded me of my promise, and again pressed upon me the importance of eternal things. Though I had not thought of my promise for years I acknowledged its obligation, but an immediate fulfilment seemed more impracticable than it did nine years before.

"I vowed with increased solemnity, that when the cares of a rising family should subside I would certainly attend to the concerns of religion.

"Again I applied myself to worldly avocations, and soon buried all thoughts of the admonition I had received. At fifty, when you, my children, were diminishing, instead of increasing my cares this heavenly monitor returned.—

"Fulfil your promise, seek religion now" was continually pressing upon my mind. I knew that I had made such a promise, but I felt dissatisfied that its fulfilment should

be claimed so soon. I regretted that I had not attended to the subject before, when I could have done it with less difficulty; but such was the extent and pressure of my business that to do it then seemed impossible. The subject made me unhappy, and after much deliberation I sought relief to my troubled feelings, by the most solemnly renewing my promise to God.—When, I said, the pressure of business is past, I will devote my whole attention to a preparation for eternity.

“No sooner had I fixed my mind on this course, than my anxieties left me, the strivings of the Spirit ceased in my bosom, and ceased for ever. When sickness warned me of approaching death I sought to fix my feelings on this subject, but it was in vain. There was a gloom and terror drawn around religion at which my soul shuddered. I felt that I was forsaken of God, but it did not move me. I had no love to God, no repentance for sin, nor wish to forsake it. I felt nothing but the sudden gloom of despair—I knew I was in the hands of a justly offended God from whom I expected no mercy and could ask none. With these feelings I am now about to enter the eternal world. To you my children I can only say, profit by my example—quench not the Spirit—seek religion now, if you would avoid a miserable eternity; put not off the concerns of your souls till”—The sentence died upon his lips; his strength, which

had been all summoned to make this last effort, suddenly failed, he fell back upon his bed, and with a groan that seemed to speak the pains of another world, the immortal spirit took its flight from that body which it had inhabited nearly fourscore years, to receive according to that it had done.

This little narrative I had from a grandson of the old man, who stood by his dying bed. He was a minister of the Gospel, and dated his first permanent conviction from the solemnities of that awful scene. The descendants of the old man were numerous, most of whom became hopefully pious. Two, who are now preachers, and several others were first awakened by his dying charge.

A few particulars in the last years of this aged sinner are perhaps worthy of remark.

Three years before his death there was a revival in the place where he resided, and the son with whom he lived was a subject of its influence. He made the most violent opposition to his sons religious feelings, and never whilst able to move about the house did he remain in the room during family prayer nor till his dying hour was a prayer offered in his hearing at his request.

He so studiously avoided all religious conversation, that from the death of his wife, which was thirteen years previous, he was never known to say a word about his own feelings, till in his dying moments he made the communication above given.—*Boston Monitor.*

OBITUARY.

Died in Milford, Mass., June 30, 1824. Mrs. REBECCA LONG, consort of Rev. David Long, and eldest daughter of Mr. Tyler Curtis, late of Worcester, aged 46. She has left an affectionate husband and three children to mourn their loss, who were not insensible of her worth.

In this event, many are deeply afflicted. To her family, her superior domestic qualities, and her pious counsels and instructions, were an inestimable treasure. Her affability, prudence, and sound judgment secured the esteem and confidence of relatives and friends, the people with whom she was connected, and a large circle of acquaintances abroad.

In her religious character, she was uniform and exemplary. And to those especially, who were most intimately acquainted with her practical piety, her deep humility and self-abasement appeared conspicuous. Her last illness, which was of more than two years continuance, and which was often attended with peculiar distress, was borne with distinguished patience and resignation. An apprehension early possessed her mind, that her complicated maladies would terminate only with her life. But this apprehension was seldom attended with that depression of spirits, which is often found to be a consequence. Her faith in the Saviour enabled her to contemplate the approaching scenes of death and eternity with composure, and often calmly to administer counsel and consolation to her afflicted family. At some times, she felt in a measure the want of spiritual comforts. But at all times, she manifested an unshaken resolution to yield her temporal and eternal interests to the divine disposal.

As her dissolution drew near, her sufferings greatly increased; and she found additional need of prayer for an increase of patience and submission to the will of God. But not a murmuring word, through the whole of her long illness, was ever known to escape from her tongue. For a few days before her death, her sufferings became extreme. She was sensible she was entering the "valley of the shadow of death," and engaging in the final conflict with the "last enemy." In the intervals of her

paroxysms, she made many observations to those about her, exhorting them to prepare for such a time as she was then passing. It is scarcely possible for any but an eye witness to conceive with what solemnity and energy such observations were made. As long as she was able to speak, her reason remained entire, even when the agonies of death had seized her whole frame. At length the moment arrived when all her toils were to end. The extremity of her sufferings appeared to subside, several hours before her death. After passing an hour in the greatest conceivable distress, she fell into a state of apparent insensibility, from which she did not afterwards awake; and at last resigned her breath without a struggle, and doubtless departed in peace to mansions of eternal rest. *The righteous hath hope in his death.*

The funeral solemnities were attended, July 2, by a numerous auditory, who testified their respect and affection for the deceased, by their solemnity and tenderness. An appropriate discourse was delivered on the occasion by Rev. Nathaniel Emmons, D. D. on Job. i. 21: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

[Communicated.]

The Obituary notices sent us, which do not appear in this Number, are not deemed of sufficient general interest to justify their insertion.

TO SUBSCRIBERS.

The Subscribers for the Christian Magazine who intend to discontinue the Work at the close of the current year, are requested to give notice of their intentions to the Printer or to some Agent, before the issuing of the next Number. A compliance with this request will be a special favor to the Publishing Committee as they are making arrangements for publishing the second Volume.

THE
CHRISTIAN MAGAZINE.

VOL. I.

DECEMBER, 1824.

No. 12.

ORIGINAL COMMUNICATIONS.

GODLINESS.

To be godly is to be like God; or to have the same kind of holy affections which he has. "God is love." And his love is disinterested benevolence, which extends to all perceptive beings. He requires the same kind of love of his intelligent creatures, which he exercises himself. His first and great command is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart; and the second is, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." These two commands comprise the essence of true religion, or real godliness. Holy affections are of the same nature, whether they exist in God, or the creature. True benevolence in men is the moral image of God, or the essence of godliness. But those benevolent affections, which have God for their immediate object, more properly constitute what we are to understand by godliness.— And this leads me to observe,

1. That godliness implies right affections towards the character of God. The godly man loves God for what he is in himself.—

He loves those moral perfections, which form his moral character. He loves the goodness of God in all its branches, or different modifications of benevolence, kindness, mercy, justice, truth and grace.— And he loves these moral attributes, because they are, in their own nature, morally excellent and amiable; and because they are such affections, as he is conscious exist in his own breast.— He also loves the power, the knowledge and wisdom of God, because these are inseparably connected with his moral attributes and entirely under their influence. Hence godliness implies right affection towards the whole character of God. The godly man is pleased; that God is just such a being as he is. He esteems, admires and loves every part of the divine character. He feels a peculiar pleasure in the direct, immediate contemplation of the being and attributes of God. He rejoices that such a being exists, without any regard to his own personal happiness. There is no godliness in loving God merely for his favors, because such love does not imme-

diately terminate upon God, but upon ourselves. This is real self-ishness and directly opposed to godliness. But to love God himself and delight in him is to be conformed to his nature, to bear his image and to be truly godly.

2. Godliness implies right affections towards the works of God.—He has made all things; and for his pleasure they are and were created. Hence he is to be seen in all his works, which display his great and glorious perfections.—All created objects are capable of being viewed in two very different lights, as they are in themselves, and as they are the production of God. Men destitute of godliness take pleasure in viewing the sun, moon and stars and the earth with all its furniture. They love the world and the things of the world. But only the godly take pleasure in contemplating created objects, as the works of God. Their affections terminate, not on the creature, but on the Creator. They love not the world itself, which appears to be vanity, but as the workmanship of God and as the instrument of promoting his glory. There is not a single created object, which the ungodly can bear to contemplate as the work of God. They never mean to let their contemplations extend beyond created objects themselves. For as soon as they view the sun as God's sun, the moon as his moon, the stars as his stars, the earth as his earth, or themselves as his creatures, their fears are alarmed

and their hopes are lost. Their ungodly hearts can take no pleasure in contemplating God himself, or any thing that necessarily leads their minds to God. But they who are godly, delight in contemplating every thing, which brings God into view and displays his glorious perfections. Here the Psalmist says, "The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them, that have pleasure therein." And he often speaks of the delight and transport, which he felt in contemplating God through the medium of his works. That love and joy, which arise from viewing created objects, as the work of God, are of the nature of godliness. Godliness will dispose men to contemplate created objects, as displays of the divine perfections; and to take delight in viewing him in those things, which he made on purpose to manifest himself to his intelligent creatures.—Much of true piety and real godliness consists in devout and delightful meditations upon the works of God. For right affections towards these works terminate upon God himself, which makes them godly affections.

3. Godliness implies right affections towards God's ultimate end in all his works. God has one great ultimate end in all he ever has done, and ever will do. This ultimate end is the eternal purpose, which he purposed in Christ Jesus. The glorious scheme of man's redemption lies at the bottom of all his works. And this

scheme is revealed in the gospel. Real godliness, therefore, necessarily implies a cordial approbation of the way of salvation by Christ. There cannot be a godly unbeliever. No man can possess the moral image of God and yet not feel right affections towards his gracious design of saving sinners through the divine Redeemer. The supreme glory of God, shines in the face of Christ.— Those, who love the father, must love the Son. And those, who love the real glory of God, must love it where it shines with the brightest lustre. The ancient saints viewed the promises of the gospel afar off and embraced them; and later saints view them as accomplished and rejoice in them. Every godly person is a true believer in Christ; and feels right affections towards God for sending his Son into the world to save Sinners. Hence Christ said, “Every man, that hath heard and hath learned of the Father cometh unto me.” And again he said, “ye believe in God, believe also in me.” “Faith worketh by love;” that is, faith in Christ naturally flows from love to God. No man can truly love God and not feel his need of Christ to make an atonement for his sins and render it consistent with the justice of God, to pardon and save sinners. Godliness necessarily implies, not only true benevolence, but real repentance and unfeigned faith in the divine redeemer. Godliness will lead a person to right views and

feelings towards the gospel, which includes and manifests the ultimate end of God in all his works of creation and providence.

4. Godliness implies right affections towards the laws of God. These are a transcript of the holiness and justice of the deity; and clearly express what is agreeable and disagreeable to his heart. He loves what he requires and hates what he forbids. Hence true love to God must really approve of all his precepts, prohibitions and threatenings. And an approbation of those, supposes a dutiful and obedient spirit, or a readiness to do whatsoever God has commanded. The godly delight in the law of God; and it is their meat and drink to do his will. David and Paul and other godly men speak of the law of God with peculiar approbation and express a willingness to obey his commands without reluctance and without delay. Hence godliness implies universal obedience to all the divine requirements. Love is the fulfilling of the law; and naturally leads those, who possess it, to make the revealed will of God the rule of all their thoughts, words and actions. In this way, piety or godliness has a universal influence over the heart and life and governs a man at all times and under all circumstances. The godly man performs the common actions of life after a godly sort; because, whether he eats, or drinks, or whatever he does, he does all to the glory of God

And all the affections, desires and volitions, which ultimately terminate upon God, are of the nature and essence of godliness. I may add,

5. That godliness implies right affections towards the providence of God. God constantly and universally governs the world. He not only moves the wheels of nature and causes the changes of seasons, but has a controlling influence over the lives and health, the views and designs, the actions and circumstances of all mankind. He is to be seen every day and every where in the works of providence. This the godly believe, and in this they rejoice. That the Lord reigns is the source of their daily peace, support and comfort. And perhaps more of their holy affections terminate upon the providence of God than upon any other divine object. They live in the habit of seeing God and conversing with him on the government of the world in general and of themselves in particular. Thus, godliness consists in those holy affections, which have either the character, or works, or designs, or laws, or providence of God for their direct and supreme object. Godliness, in a word, consists in those holy affections, which lead a person to regard and love God, "of whom, to whom and through whom are all things; unto whom be glory forever. Amen."

PAUL.

SERMON—No. IX.

THE HAPPY INFLUENCE OF HOLY FEAR.

PROVERBS, XXVIII. 14.—*Happy is the man that feareth always.*

While Solomon maintains a distinction between saints and sinners, he draws their characters and describes their distinguishing affections and actions by the most pointed contrast. This method, which is observable through the whole book of Proverbs, is calculated to make the deepest impression upon the mind. In every chapter and almost in every verse, we find the saint and the sinner mentioned together and distinguished, by some peculiar traits in their characters. This is evidently the case in the verse, which contains the text: "Happy is the man, that feareth always; but he, that hardeneth his heart, shall fall into mischief." It is the character of saints to pass their sojourning here in fear; but it is the character of sinners to cast off fear and restrain prayer before God. By "the man that feareth always," Solomon undoubtedly means a real saint. And on the contrary, by the man, "that hardeneth his heart," he means a graceless sinner. This mark of distinction applies, generally, to saints and sinners. While all sinners harden their hearts, all saints live in the habitual exercise of holy fear. The term, always, is not to be understood in the strict-

est sense, to signify a perpetual, uninterrupted exercise of that affection, which is properly called holy fear. It means only, that good men habitually live in the exercise of that fear, which is the beginning of wisdom. Hence the words of our text, place before us the following sentiment—*Saints derive great benefit from the habitual exercise of holy fear.* In our attention to this subject it is proposed,

I. To show that saints do, habitually, exercise holy fear; and,

II. To show that they derive great benefit from it.

I. It is proposed to show, that saints live in the habitual exercise of holy fear.

As there are two sorts of moral exercises, holy and unholy; so there are two sorts of fear, holy and unholy. Unholy fear consists in the dread of personal natural evil; and flows from selfishness. But holy fear consists in the dread of moral evil; and flows from benevolence. The fear, which flows from disinterested benevolence, is a truly holy affection; and is often represented to comprehend all religious affections. Job uses the word in this sense. "And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom." David says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." And Solomon repeatedly adopts the same mode of expression in this book of Proverbs. He says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge." And

again, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." There may be a peculiar reason, why fear is so often used in scripture to denote all right affections towards God. A view of the greatness, glory, majesty, purity and sovereignty of God, is directly suited to fill the minds of all created beings with reverence; and especially of all sinful creatures, who have justly incurred his awful displeasure. And, perhaps, a clear view of the divine being never fails to excite the affection, either of holy or unholy fear in the minds of the sinful children of men. It is certain, however, that the habitual exercise of true love to God never fails to produce the habitual exercise of holy fear in true saints. Their holy love always produces holy fear. Here I would observe,

1. That saints live in the habitual fear of offending God. They love God supremely; and their supreme love produces a holy fear of displeasing him. Fear is the natural fruit of love in a child, a servant, a subject, or friend. The dutiful child fears to offend the parent; the dutiful servant fears to offend the master; the dutiful subject fears to offend his sovereign; and the sincere friend fears to offend the person, whom he loves and esteems. So the child of God fears to offend his heavenly father, whom he supremely and ardently loves. All the real friends of God, who habitually love him, habitually fear

to offend him. There is nothing, which they more sincerely desire than to enjoy the smiles of their heavenly Father. They esteem his favor as life; and his loving kindness as better than life. And in the same degree, in which they desire the light of God's countenance, they dread his frowns. Their holy love excites and maintains a holy fear of offending the object of their supreme affection. They live, as seeing him, who is invisible; and their habitual sense of the divine presence creates a holy dread of every thing, which they know would displease the eye of perfect holiness. They are sensible that he looks not on the outward appearance, but upon the heart; and abhors every unholy desire and selfish affection. And they fear to offend him in their hearts, as well as by their actions.

2. Saints have a habitual fear of dishonoring God. Their love to his character and interest produces a holy fear of doing dishonor to his name in the eyes of the world. As they love him supremely themselves, so they heartily desire, that others should feel the same affection towards him. They know it is their duty to glorify as well as to enjoy God. They are sensible, that they ought, not only to maintain high thoughts of God, but to express their high esteem of him in their conduct; which is suited to lead others to glorify their Father, who is in heaven. And so far as they do give God

the supreme place in their own hearts and desire his glory, they will be afraid of bringing the least reproach upon his character. They know the treachery of their own hearts and how apt they are to forget and forsake God, which directly tends to bring dishonor upon him. They are sensible, that they are prone to abuse divine favors, to disobey the divine commands and to violate their own solemn vows. And such conduct, they know, is contrary to the honor and glory of God. This fills their hearts, habitually, with holy fear, lest they should say or do something, which should give occasion to the enemies of the Lord to think, or to speak reproachfully of him.

3. Saints always have a fear of dishonoring religion. This is a cause, which lies near their hearts and which they profess to be engaged to promote. They desire the prosperity of Zion and the enlargement of the Redeemer's kingdom. The Psalmist says, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy." It is the ardent desire of the children of God, that he would arise and plead his own cause and fill the whole earth with his glory. And they not only desire the prevalence of vital piety, but habitually feel willing to exert themselves for the promotion of the cause of

Christ. But they are very sensible, that they are liable to obstruct and bring into reproach that very religion, which appears so desirable and important, by not adorning, in their lives, the doctrine of God their Saviour. The world will judge of the nature and importance of religion, by the influence, which it appears to have upon the spirit and conduct of those, who profess it. If they do not walk worthy of the vocation, with which they are called, the world will despise and oppose not only themselves, but the religion, which they profess. Hence the spirit of true religion always produces a holy fear in the hearts of saints, lest they should, by their criminal defects and imperfections, dishonor the religion of Christ and obstruct the promotion of his interest in the world. When a man is heartily engaged in the pursuit of any important object in the face of opposition, he is continually in fear of betraying it, by inattention, by inactivity, or by some unguarded conduct. So the friends of religion, habitually, fear, lest they dishonor and in that way, obstruct the important cause of religion, which the world oppose, and which they sincerely desire to promote. David was afraid of dishonoring religion in the company of the wicked.—“I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue; I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me.” Saints are continu-

ally in fear of dishonoring religion, while their duty calls them to mix with the world and expose themselves to the sharp and malignant eyes of the enemies of all righteousness.

4. Saints live in a holy fear of grieving one another. They are of one heart and one soul. They feel themselves united together by the bonds of brotherly affection. They are members of one body, so that if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it. Every saint is habitually afraid of offending the real children of God. The psalmist was afraid of offending the generation of God's people. Paul was grieved at the unchristian conduct of professed believers. He says, “For many walk, of whom I have told you often and now tell you, even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.” And as he was sensibly grieved at the misconduct of professors, so he was very fearful of doing any thing, which should offend or grieve real christians. Hence he said, “Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh, while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.” Christians have great influence upon each other. And as they are liable to injure and grieve each other, so they maintain a holy fear of giving offence to one another and of pro-

ducing mutual grief and sorrow. This fear is always in proportion to the prevalence of brotherly love, because it arises from it.

5. Real saints live in holy fear of injuring the souls of sinners -- They sincerely desire their spiritual and eternal good and really endeavor to promote it. Still they are sensible, that they may be the means of stopping their ears, blinding their eyes and hardening their hearts in sin. Sinners are exceedingly apt to stumble over the stumbling-blocks, which saints throw in their way. They are far more apt to follow the bad than the good examples of christians. -- They are always ready to eat up the sins of God's people and to plead their imperfections as an excuse for their stupidity, impenitence and unbelief. Saints know how the world are watching to their own injury and ruin. And this creates a holy fear of causing them, for whom christ died, to perish. They are afraid of injuring sinners by not giving them convincing evidence of their own sincerity; or by not warning, admonishing and restraining them; or by not doing these things in a proper time and manner. They know that they ought to condemn sinners and leave them without any ground of excuse for not living a holy, devout and heavenly life. But they find themselves so deficient in their duty towards poor, guilty creatures around them, that they fear they shall

prove the means of their eternal destruction.

6. Saints have a holy fear of all the objects of the world. They know that they are forbidden to love any of these objects supremely. Our Savior has told them, that they cannot serve God and mammon. And the apostle John says -- "Love not the world, nor the things of the world; for if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." The world is to be conquered by christians, and brought into entire subordination to a holy and religious life. But saints have so much remaining corruption, that they are daily in danger of being overcome by the world, and led astray from God, their supreme good. This creates an habitual fear, at all times and in all places, and in all employments, of departing from God. Their hearts are bent to backslide. And unless they are in the fear of the Lord, all the day, they are exposed to stupidity, negligence in duty and to every kind of disobedience and rebellion against God. I now proceed to show,

II. That saints derive great benefit from the habitual exercise of holy fear. This may be illustrated by the following observations.

1. Holy fear affords peculiar pleasure and satisfaction to their minds. It always flows from love to the most amiable objects. That fear, which flows from hatred to

amiable objects, is extremely painful. But the fear, which flows from love to such objects, is a pleasant and delightful exercise of the heart. It may, therefore, be truly said, "happy is the man that feareth always." Holy fear is an exercise of true benevolence, which is naturally accompanied with pleasure; because every exercise of true love perfectly accords with all the natural and moral powers of mind and produces self-consistency and self-approbation. They, who are in the fear of the Lord all the day and trust in him to govern all their views and feelings, enjoy great peace and satisfaction. This filial fear, which flows from the spirit of adoption makes them truly happy. And the more they exercise this holy fear, the more of heaven they enjoy on earth.

2. While saints exercise holy fear, they feel themselves best guarded against every moral evil. So long as they fear to offend and dishonor God, nothing can greatly tend to lead them from the path of duty. Their eyes are open, their minds are awake, their consciences are tender and their whole souls are armed against every temptation. They are in a situation similar to Christ's when Satan assaulted him and presented all the kingdoms and objects of the world to his view, in order to divert his attention and alienate his affections from his Father.—While the fear of God is before the eyes of his children, they are

under the strongest guard against every assault from Satan, from the world and from their own evil hearts. Hence they sensibly derive a great benefit from living in the exercise of holy fear. This is the benefit, to which Solomon seems to refer in the text: "Happy is the man, that feareth always; but he that hardeneth his heart, shall fall into mischief." The plain idea here is, that the exercise of holy fear will effectually preserve the righteous from every evil and false way. To be preserved from natural evil is a great benefit; but it is a much greater benefit to be preserved from moral evil. Though sinners may not think it of much importance to be kept from sin; yet saints must think themselves exceedingly happy to have their daily petition answered; "lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

3. The exercise of holy fear fits the children of God for the right performance of every duty. They are much more in danger of performing duty in a wrong manner than of totally neglecting it.—Every duty is to be done heartily, as unto the Lord and not unto men. And while christians live in the exercise of holy fear, they are not only careful not to neglect any known duty, but also not to perform it in a sinful manner. Hence Solomon connects holy fear and true obedience together and represents the latter as flowing from the former. "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter;

Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty man. Servile fear is a great excitement to external obedience; and holy fear is a much greater excitement to internal and sincere obedience. Habitual obedience to God is the natural fruit and effect of the habitual exercise of holy fear. While saints set the fear of God before their eyes, they will revere, respect and obey his holy and righteous commandments.

4. The habitual exercise of holy fear has a happy tendency to make the children of God grow in grace. While they are under the influence of this affection, they will ardently desire to become more conformed to God and more completely delivered from the power and dominion of sin. They will ardently desire holiness for its own sake, not merely to prepare them for happiness, but to fit them for duty. They really desire holiness, because unholy-ness is what they really hate and dread more than any punishment, that can follow. Sinners may desire holiness as a means to escape misery, or secure happiness; but saints, in the fear of the Lord, desire holiness, that they may obey, serve and please their heavenly Father. They hunger and thirst after righteousness itself, because this only can fit them for the service of God, who is righteous and loveth righteousness. So long, therefore, as saints are in the exercise of holy fear, they will

rest in no present attainments in grace, but forget the things that are behind and press forward after higher and higher degrees of holiness; and never feel satisfied, until they arrive unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ and possess sinless perfection.

IMPROVEMENT.

1. Since holy fear produces happiness, a holy life is the most happy life. This is very commonly disbelieved and denied by unholy persons. And it is denied, because it is supposed, that a holy life is filled with fear. Sinners imagine, that the restraint and strictness, which arise from the fear, that is inseparable from a holy life, must be very painful.— But holy fear, which saints habitually exercise, is essentially different from unholy fear, which has torment. It awakens, purifies and enlarges the affections and removes every unpleasant and painful emotion. It excludes from the heart every dull, low and evil affection and fills it with such affections, as are tender, heavenly and delightful. The most exalted and happy spirits in heaven have the highest reverence towards the great Sovereign of the universe. The most perfect saints on earth have the most constant and lively fear towards God. And their holy joy is as great as their holy fear. Their holy fear gives a proper direction and has a proper influence in respect to all their

views, feelings, designs and actions. And it lays a foundation for the most rational and permanent happiness.

2. Since holy fear is so beneficial to saints, they may expect great evil from the want of it.— In their hopes, comforts and enjoyments they are very liable to lose the watch and guard over their feelings. And then proud, vain and sinful affections fill their hearts. They then harden their hearts against the exercise of holy fear and fall into mischief.— When they cease to exercise holy fear, they are exposed to all manner of evil. They decline from the doctrines, duties and enjoyments of religion. They are liable to be ensnared and overcome by delusion and temptation.— They will probably be drawn into external disobedience to the commands of God and bring upon themselves his righteous reproofs and corrections. To his ancient people God said, “Thine own wickedness shall correct thee and thy backslidings shall reprove thee; know, therefore, and see, that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God; and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord God of hosts.”

3. It appears from the nature of holy fear, that so far as it prevails, it prevents or removes servile fear. Sinners are constantly exposed to the greatest and worst of evils. And they live in constant fear of evil, unless they are

totally stupid and ignorant respecting their dangerous and alarming situation. When sinners are awakened and convicted by the light of truth, they see and feel themselves to be exposed to every possible evil. And their minds are filled with fear and distress. But their fear is sinful and painful. From such fear they can have no proper relief, unless they turn to God and submit themselves into his hands. Then in view of his holiness and majesty, they will fear before him in truth and love. But their slavish, painful fear will be removed from their hearts. And they will be filled with hope, peace and joy. When saints have departed from God and hardened their hearts from his fear, they fall into servile, painful and shameful fear. They then find themselves to be in the most guilty and dangerous condition and their minds are filled with distressing apprehensions. From this state, they cannot be relieved, until they return to God in the exercise of that holy fear, which flows from true love. But this holy fear removes from their hearts that slavish fear, which has torment. Holy fear always removes servile fear from the hearts of saints and sinners.

4. From what has been said on the present subject, let all persons be induced to examine themselves. Of sinners, it is written, “There is no fear of God before their eyes.” But of saints, it is written, “The Lord taketh pleasure in

them, that fear him." Let every one, then, seriously and honestly inquire and consider, whether he has the true fear of God before his eyes and in his heart. Have you lived in the habitual exercise of that fear, which is holy in its nature and happy in its influence? If you will truly answer this single question, you may form a correct judgment respecting your character, your conduct and state.

5. This subject strongly urges sinners to exchange their unholy, for holy fear. They have offended God and dishonored him. And they deserve his present and eternal displeasure. While they continue to harden their hearts, they will fall into greater and greater evils; and must be finally and eternally punished, unless they repent and turn to God. And until they do repent, they have reason to be in constant fear of being punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power. While they remain of their present character and in their present condition, they are constantly liable to that sinful fear, which has torment. The duty, the safety and the happiness of sinners require and bind them to renounce their unholy affections and their servile and sinful fears, for the holy and happy fear of God.

Finally—Let saints be induced to maintain the constant exercise of holy fear. In view of its nature and effects, they must be

deeply sensible of the importance of this duty. "Let us, then, hear the conclusion of the whole matter; Fear God and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

REVIEW.

A Sermon, preached in Springfield, Aug. 28, 1823, at an annual meeting of the Bible Society, the Foreign Missionary Society, and the Education Society of the county of Hamden, by the Rev. Wm. B. Sprague, Pastor of the first Church in West Springfield, from John XII. 5. "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence and given to the poor?"

It is always an easy thing to find fault. Whenever the hearts of men are opposed to any transaction, their imaginations are quick to invent plausible and important objections to it. It is truly astonishing to see with what facility any important measure may be made to appear impracticable, impolitic, unjust, or injurious in its tendency, by those who are unwilling it should go into operation, when there are no valid objections to it in the minds of others.—There is not, it is believed a more ready, or a more common method of preventing the influence of any

thing, which is good, than by raising objections against it. Objections to the truth often prevent its reception. Objections to plans of usefulness prevent their being undertaken. Objections to the duties, inculcated in the scriptures prevent their performance. That man, therefore, who satisfactorily answers the objections which are known to exist, and to influence the minds of others in regard to the doctrines or duties of the gospel, does an important service to the public. Such, in our estimation, is the service which the author of the sermon before us, has done.

The text which he selected is the words of Judas, when Mary the sister of Lazarus, probably in token of her gratitude to Christ for having raised her brother from the dead, came and poured upon him a box of very precious ointment, and wiped his feet with the hair of her head. "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence and given to the poor?" In this objection to the grateful and pious deed of Mary, Mr. S. perceives something strikingly analogous to the objections which are often made at the present day, with a show of regard to the poor, against charitable efforts for the promotion of religion. After having stated, in very appropriate terms, the insinuating and deceptive manner, in which Judas made his objection to the pious act of Mary, and the resemblance which his conduct bears to that of modern objectors to

religious charity, Mr. S. names and answers several objections which are made to the benevolent exertions of the present age. But before giving our readers a view of these objections, and the manner in which Mr. S. disposes of them, we feel inclined to let them see from his own words how he introduces his subject. Referring to the expression of gratitude and piety recorded in the text, he says,

"No sooner was this act of respect and affection towards Jesus performed, than there starts up an advocate for the poor, and in guise of all that is fair and kind and honorable, reproaches this good woman with the charge of wasting the bounties of providence; and there was so much in the remark that looked like being frugal for the sake of being charitable; like mingling benevolence and economy together, that the other disciples seem to have fallen in with it, and to have lamented that the ointment had not been applied to some better purpose.

But who is this preacher of charity, whose sympathies are so suddenly awakened for the children of want; who feels their necessities so deeply that even an act of affection to his master gives him pain, because it might have been directed for their relief? It was a thief: it was a traitor: it was a devil.

It had been well for the cause of christianity, if Judas had been the last to raise objections against

a spirit of active benevolence; but unhappily, he stands at the head of a long list of objectors, many of whom have drank so deeply of his spirit, that we should almost think they had set at his feet, and listened to his instructions. You can hardly lift a hand in the cause of religious charity, but avarice, with a withering blow, stands ready to paralyze it. It does not indeed, usually, stand forth in its own hideous garb, for then it would be recognized and driven back in disgrace, but in a multitude of cases besides that of Judas, it puts on the cloak of economy and assumes the lying look of charity. When, for instance, any plan is set on foot for evangelizing the heathen, or extending the circulation of the Bible, a thousand hearts are throbbing all on a sudden, for the temporal miseries of the poor; and a thousand tongues are busy in proclaiming the paramount importance of administering to their necessities. If the invention of Judas himself had been laid under requisition, I can hardly imagine that he could have found out more ingenious reasons for opposing the great cause of religious charity, than are often heard from the lips of our modern objectors."

Before entering upon his proposed discussion, Mr. S. gives notice, that the objections which he shall bring to view, are to be considered as made, not so much against any particular department of charitable exertion, as against

the general cause; or if any limitation is to be admitted, it will be that which is suggested by the particular objects of the societies, to which he addresses himself.—He disclaims all intention of discussing the question, what object of charity has the highest claim; though in passing, he remarks that if we have heathen at home and heathen abroad who are equally needy, those who are on our borders, or in the midst of us, have the first claim to our compassion, on the same general principle, that it is the duty of every man to provide for his own family, rather than those with whom he is not particularly connected.—But, in his opinion, there is no interference in the different objects of public charity.

The first objection which he notices as being often made against all attempts to spread the gospel over the world, is, "that the time is not yet come; that all these exertions are premature."

The method which Mr. Sprague takes to answer this objection is ingenious and satisfactory. After reminding his audience that the persons who offer this objection admit that the world is to be evangelized, at some future period, and that this is to be accomplished by human instrumentality, he shows them that if the objection is valid, it must be supported on one of two grounds; either that the word of God has expressly decided that this is a work for future generations, and therefore

is not to be attempted by us ; or else, that providence has intimated the same thing, by opposing obstacles to our success, which are absolutely insurmountable. With respect to the first of these, he shows that the bible, so far from countenancing the idea that the work of sending the gospel over the world belongs exclusively to future generations, contains an express command from the Saviour which binds all his followers of every age and nation to engage in this work. "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."

In attempting to show that the objection under consideration has no better support on the ground that providence has opposed insurmountable obstacles to the work, Mr. S. appears with singular strength and beauty. Our readers shall hear him in his own language.

"What let me ask are these obstacles ? Is it, that the persons to whom the gospel is to be sent are, at present, inaccessible ; that there are mountains between us and them, which the human foot dare not attempt to traverse ; or oceans, which the enterprize of man has never yet ventured to navigate ? No ; there are no obstacles of this kind, which the merchant in the pursuit of wealth, or even the traveller in pursuit of pleasure, does not surmount every year that passes. Is it, that the internal state of those nations render it perilous in the extreme

to go among them ? No ; for they have already in very many instances, received our missionaries with kindness ; and there are not wanting men in the community, who are willing to take up their residence among them, provided only they can be furnished with a subsistence. Is it, that they have hitherto stedfastly resisted every effort to enlighten and sanctify them, and that by living in heathenish darkness a few centuries more, we may hope that they will become tired of their miserable degradation, and rise up more readily from the bed of spiritual death at the call of the gospel ? By no means, for the success which has already attended these exertions, proves that the bosom of the savage, or the pagan, is *now* capable of becoming the dwelling place of God's Spirit ; and all experience testifies that there is no redeeming power in reason darkened and perverted by sin, which will make him the more ready to sacrifice his lusts and cruelties, when they have become more firmly revitted by indulgence. Or is it finally, that the present generation have not the means of engaging in this work ; that those who have the gospel find it difficult on account of their extreme poverty to maintain it among themselves ? Let the refinement, and luxury, and extravagance of the present age, bear witness that this is not true ; for if the christian nations would all feel the weight of their obliga-

tion in this subject, and every man would do according to his several ability, the world would soon be evangelized, and not an individual should know that he is the poorer for it."

The second objection to sending the gospel among the destitute which Mr. S. considers, is, "*that God will accomplish his own work in his own time*, and therefore we need give ourselves no concern about it." Did our limits admit we should be glad to quote all which is said in answer to this objection. But we must content ourselves by giving our readers the following brief reply.

"But in order to try this principle, just for a moment, bring it to bear upon subjects in which you do feel an interest. If you are a farmer, why did you not, at the opening of the season, instead of casting your seed into the earth and watching its progress with the care and attention of a good husbandman:—why did you not say to yourself, 'I will trust to the providence of God to do all this labour; and when the season of harvest comes, I will go into my fields and reap the product of the divine bounty.' Or if you are a merchant, why did you not say at the usual time of purchasing your supplies, 'I will cast all this care upon God, and trust to his providence to replenish my shelves, and thus I will grow rich without the usual drudgery of a mercantile life.' You would be offended with me, and justly, if I

were to suppose you capable of such intolerable folly. But who does not see that this is precisely the same principle which you admit, when you urge the objection which I am considering. In both cases, it has all the absurdity of barefaced fatalism."

Another objection which Mr. S. states and considers as made to sending the gospel to savages and heathens, is, "they can do well enough without it, and that as they will be judged only according to the light which they have, they will not be required to answer for the rejection of it." Here Mr. S. meets the objector with an eloquent and moving appeal to his own feelings, and urges him to make a fair estimate of the advantages which he enjoys from christianity, and to say, at what price, he would relinquish these, and exchange circumstances with the benighted savages.

"But could you, my friend, do well enough without the gospel? Are all these temporal comforts which it secures to you, so unimportant, that you could consent cheerfully to resign them up, and sink down to the miserable degradation of a heathen or savage life. Is the happiness of civilized society, and social life, and domestic relations of so little value, that you could relinquish it without a sigh, and go and make your home, and find your grave among the inhabitants of the wilderness? Above all, is the certainty of an immortal existence not to be pre-

ferred to the dark and trembling apprehensions of unenlightened reason ;—the certainty that God will forgive sin, to the gloomy forebodings of mere natural conscience ;—and is there nothing in a pagan dying bed, which you would not as soon welcome, as the peaceful, or triumphant departure of the christian ? If you value the blessings of the gospel yourself, remember they will be as valuable to the savages and the heathen, as they are to you. They have the same capacity for improvement, and are, originally, as capable of the most refined enjoyment as yourself ; and before you decide that they can do well enough without the gospel, sit down and make a sober estimate of all its blessings, and say, at what price, you would consent to part with them : say for how much, you would consent to live the life of a savage, to grope through the valley of death, with the dim twilight of nature, and to take your chance with savages and heathen in the eternal world.”

In reply to the assertion “ that these people will be judged only according to their means, and that if they do not enjoy the gospel, they will not have to answer for the rejection of it.” Mr. S. Admits the truth of it, but asks, “ what then ? Because the heathen will not have to answer for the rejection of the gospel, is it a light thing for them to perish ? Is there nothing to be deprecated in the doom of an impenitent pagan,

whose reason has been perverted, and whose conscience deadened by long continued indulgence in sin ?”

The fourth objection noticed in the discourse before us, is one which, strange as it may appear, we often hear from almost all classes of people. It is, “ that they have nothing to spare for the purpose of sending the gospel to the destitute.” In answer to this, Mr. S. asks the objector, whether it is because he is so poor that he cannot offer a mite in charity, or whether he considers the object unworthy of being promoted. If it is the latter, then he says, “ Let me tell you that whether you think it deserving your attention, or not, it is the cause which occupied the infinite mind from eternity ; in which all the agonies of Calvary were endured ; in which the blood of martyrs has been poured out like water ; and which is destined to be the theatre of the most magnificent exhibition of the divine perfections.”

“ Or do you make this plea on the ground of poverty ? But in order that it may be sustained, what amount of poverty do you suppose that you must be able to plead ? If all your earnings are needed for the support of your family, then I admit that you are justly absolved from this obligation, because providence has constituted you their supporter and guardian. But perhaps while you are pleading poverty as an excuse for not assisting to send the gospel to the destitute, you would be

offended, if you supposed the world actually regarded you as a poor man; perhaps too you are not so poor but that you can afford something to gratify the pride of dress, or of equipage; something it may be for luxury and extravagance; something even for amusement and dissipation. The amount of this plea of poverty, then, as it respects many people is this;—that when the claims of appetite, of pride, of self-indulgence, are presented, they are both rich and bountiful; but when the suffering Saviour speaks to them from the agonies of his cross, and tenderly urges them to feed his sheep and his lambs, their hands are clenched with an iron grasp, and their hearts are harder than the nether mill-stone.”

The fifth objection is drawn from “the alleged want of success by which these charitable exertions have hitherto been attended; it is confidently said, that after a fair experiment, it is found that nothing can be done in the way of evangelizing the heathen; and that it is high time that such a waste of money and labor, and life should be discontinued.”

In reply to this, Mr. S. pertinently asks, “what if the labors of missionaries in heathen lands, have hitherto been unsuccessful; is that to be the signal for disobeying the plainest of all divine precepts? What is the language of this conduct, save that we will not trust God farther than we can under-

stand the reasons of his dispensations?

But I have another answer in reserve to this objection; and that is an absolute denial of the fact on which the objection is built, I charge no man with intentional misrepresentation; but I must be allowed to say, that I blush for the ignorance of those, who, with all the means of information within their reach, can coolly assert, that all the efforts of the present day are lost labour; that our missionaries in the east, and the west and the south, are wearing out their lives and living on public charity, without witnessing any beneficial result from their labours. The time of course does not admit of an induction of particulars; but I venture to say that any man, who will bestow proper attention on this subject, in examining authentic missionary documents, and will rise up with the conviction to which I have just referred, must have a hardihood of incredulity, or a talent at misrepresenting plain facts, which may justly entitle him to be regarded as an anomaly in the species.—Viewing all the exertions which have been made in different parts of the world, as belonging to the same extended system, we maintain fearlessly, that christians have every reason to be encouraged in view of their success. The wilderness has not assumed the aspect of Eden in a moment, and we did not expect it; but one green

spot after another has appeared, and every thing indicates that it will ere long open upon the eye in all the richness and beauty of a bright and vernal landscape."

To the *sixth* objection, viz. "That these benevolent operations are under the direction of different religious denominations," and consequently that these to whom missionaries are sent are liable to embrace false doctrines, or to be perplexed with contradictory opinions; Mr. S. has a very long and able reply, for the perusal of which, we must refer our readers to the sermon itself. We quote a few sentences only just to give them a specimen of the manner, in which he treats the objection. To the assertion "that some will propagate false views of christianity," he replies, "That system must be corrupt indeed which might not be safely substituted either for the abominations of paganism, or for absolute ignorance of all religion? But if there be corrupt and distorted systems, bearing the name of christianity, while they have nothing of its beauty or its power, which are industriously propagated, is that a reason why the genuine gospel should not be suffered to go forth, and exert its quickening and sanctifying energy?"

To the plea that the heathen are now quiet, and that they ought not be disturbed by the propagation of doctrines among them which may excite a controversial spirit, he replies:

"Yes I know that they are quiet indeed, and so is he quiet too, who has drained a cup of intoxicating poison, and lies senseless and paralyzed, in a lethargy, from which no mortal power can awake him."

To those, who think that the introduction of the gospel into destitute regions, will be attended with so much danger on the ground of religious sectarianism, he says,

"Let me remind you that you have one means of forming an accurate judgment on this subject which may not have occurred to you. It is your lot to live in a country where all the evils resulting from the existence of different religious denominations are felt: Say then, *in view of your own experience*, whether you would choose to escape, from them at the expense of plunging into all the absurdities and pollutions of a heathen land. If the inconvenience of living among Baptists and Methodists, and Episcopalians, and others who differ from you, in some unessential points, is more intolerable to *you*, than the preposterous doctrines and stupid rites of paganism, doubtless it would be so to the *heathen*, but before we believe you honest in making such an assertion, think it not strange if we expect you will show your faith by your works, and actually remove from this region of different christian denominations, to some part of the world, where you can enjoy the dark and awful privilege of living without the gospel."

The last objection, which Mr. S. notices as urged against the general object for which he pleads is, "that it is by no means certain how these charitable contributions are applied."

We are glad that this objection did not escape his notice; because we know that it is *often* made, (with what motives we pretend not to say) and attended with the most unhappy influence upon the cause of religious charity. After shewing that those into whose hands charitable contributions are deposited, are men entitled to the confidence of the public, he adds,

"But, if you still doubt in regard to the qualifications, and fidelity of those to whom the disposition of these funds is confided, by reading our missionary journals, you may know for yourself that they are not misapplied."

We think our author's address to those who cannot approve of some of the objects of charity which are brought before the public, at the present day, singularly pertinent, and pecularity well calculated to produce the most salutary effects.

"But you will say, perhaps, that some of the objects of charity at the present day you cannot approve. You are at liberty, then, to take your choice of them all, and to consecrate your influence and exertion to whatever object you may think most desirable. There is a society in active operation, designed to meliorate the

condition of the Jews; but perhaps you think, as some have actually thought, that these exertions are premature. Remember then that the world abounds with Gentiles; and that your charity is needed to assist in evangelizing *them*. But, perhaps, you have learned to look with some distrust upon the cause of *foreign* missions: then let me direct your attention to the poor savages who occupy the immense regions of desert in our own country. But do you say that even this is a great distance from us; and that there are others almost equally needy nearer home. For *their* benefit then let your charity be applied and I doubt not there will be a record made of it in heaven. But perhaps you have never been satisfied of the utility of *missionary* societies, and would prefer that your charity should go in some other channel. Happily for one part of the object for which I am pleading this afternoon, the treasury of the Bible Society is now open, and you will in a few moments be solicited to cast in your gifts. But do you tell me that you have scruples about contributing to the funds of any charitable association: Then go and search out objects of charity for yourself; go to the individuals who have not even the bible in their houses, and present it with an humble prayer, that it may be blessed to their salvation.—But if you excuse yourself from exertion in favor of one object on

the ground of your zeal for another, and finally do nothing for any, forgive me if I say, that you remind me of the man, who was seized with a fit of compassion for the poor just as a box of ointment was broken over his master's head."

It will at once, be perceived by our readers, that it has been our object in reviewing this sermon of Mr. S. to present it briefly before them, rather than to make it the subject of severe criticism. There are in our estimation, a few inaccuracies; but they are not of sufficient importance to require animadversion in this work. We will, however, just suggest a query, whether such terms as "evil genius," which are evidently of heathen origin, and which naturally bring to view the absurd and corrupt opinions of heathen mythology, ought ever to find a place in the sermons of a christian minister. But in justice to Mr. S. we feel ourselves under obligation to say, that the sermon before us, is, as a whole, written with uncommon accuracy, and in a style, which, while it is plain, neat, and perspicuous, is remarkable for its elegance and strength. There is in the expressions of Mr. S. an aptness, a pertinency, and a keenness too, which are calculated to give a peculiar interest to such a subject, as he discusses. We have always believed, that those who indulge themselves in raising the objections against religious charity, which have been consid-

ered in this discourse, ought to be ashamed; but we have never before seen a discourse which is so well calculated to make them so, as the one whose pages we have now reviewed.

SUCCESS OF MISSIONS,
NO. V.

*American Board of Commissioners
for Foreign Missions.*

This is the largest missionary Society in the United States. It sent out its first missionaries in 1812. It now supports missionaries at twenty-five different stations, in Asia or eight different nations, speaking as many different languages, and extending from east to west more than two thirds round this globe, which christian benevolence desires completely to encircle, and to fill with the knowledge of the gospel. The reader will find a brief history of the above named stations on the 30th page of this volume. Our present inquiry is, what success has attended these missions? Considering the difficulties of introducing christianity into heathen lands, and the shortness of the time since any of the missionaries have been qualified for labour in their respective stations, but little more can be reasonably expected than that they should have put in train a course of means which are to produce glorious results at some

future period. But more than this has already been effected.—The mission at Bombay which was the first established has not as yet been distinguished for the number of its converts, but from the silent and gradually increasing influence of the missionaries, their translation of the scriptures, their schools and their constant intercourse with the natives, there is much reason to believe that the foundation is already laid for the general reception of christianity at some future period. The Missionaries have translated most of the New Testament into the Mahratta language which is spoken by a larger population than that of the United States. They have also translated and printed portions of the Old Testament, and circulated among the natives 30,000 books and tracts. They have under their care 18 schools containing about 9,000 pupils. They have built a chapel for public worship. Their system of means and their influence is extending. And though it cannot be expected that *adult* Hindoos will be at once turned from their vanities unto the living God, it is certainly not improbable that Hindoo *children* brought under a course of christian instruction, taught and accustomed daily to read the holy scriptures and impressed with the precepts and doctrines of the Gospel, will soon renounce the absurdities of the Hindoo idolatry, and become advocates for the religion of Christ. And by the grace of God accom-

panying the means of his own appointment, it may be hoped that many of them will become devoted and exemplary disciples.

That there is reason for such hopes appears from a joint letter of the missionaries, in which they say: "The more extensively we declare the gospel, and the greater the increase of the knowledge of it among those who have heard it most, the stronger are our hopes that it will prove saving. And we think we discover some favorable symptoms which we should mention with gratitude to him, who holds the hearts of all men in his hands.

Our Jewish school Teachers and some others among the Jews have manifested an encouraging attention, and a degree of impression in favor of the truth; which we cannot but hope will soon break through the fear of man and be openly avowed. We have similar but stronger hopes in regard to our Jewish superintendant of schools. He expresses a speculative conviction of the truth of the christian religion, and also at times manifests a considerable degree of concern for his soul. One of our Jewish school teachers, after reading in company with him and several other Jews, from our tracts written for them, said so much in favor of the christian religion as to subject himself to a fine imposed by his people. There are also some Hindoos who manifest an increased attention, and give some evidence of a speculative convic-

tion of the truth. So do also a few Mussulmen and a few catholics. Some of the latter have manifested a determination to read the scriptures at all events."

Now here are indications of approaching success which are clearly marked. The want of greater immediate success is no ground for discouragement. It was not expected that success would be immediate. No valuable edifice can be as speedily raised as projected. It is not the usual order of divine providence that what is valuable and permanent should be of rapid growth. The most solid and long lived forest trees are those which arrive at their maturity by the slowest stages, and in almost every moral scheme the result is the same. The toil and expense are immediate, the benefits are distant. The friends of Education, of Bible, and of Missionary Societies must usually for many years walk by faith, and not by sight." They are not looking for an ephemeral crop, and therefore should not be impatient, though the soil should appear sterile and the first process of vegetation feeble.

The above remarks are applicable also to the mission at Ceylon. The prospects of this mission, however are still more encouraging. The missionaries at Ceylon have already seen the happy effects of their labours. A considerable number of the natives have not only renounced idolatry, but become pious. They

have admitted into their church seventeen converted natives, a larger number than has been admitted into some of our churches at home during the same time. They have also established 32 free schools, containing more than 1500 scholars. They have admitted into their families 118 heathen youth, who are to be boarded and educated under their entire control. They have also published and circulated tracts which are spreading and exerting an influence far and wide. Nine young men, members of the church are active and useful assistants. Others in the schools not yet belonging to the church are hopefully pious, others are seriously disposed, and very many not particularly serious are of good promise." The missionaries have distributed many copies of the scriptures which are read with seriousness. They also gain free access to the natives in conversation and preaching. These are facts which mark the success of this mission to be as great as could have been expected for the time. What is no less encouraging than it is remarkable, is, that many natives are solicitous to have schools established in their towns and villages, though they are aware that christianity will be explicitly taught in them. And what is still more encouraging, a Tamul Bible Society has been formed at Malagum composed almost entirely of heathen. Do not these things prove that the long

established prejudices of the heathen are giving away and the foundation is already laid for the universal spread of christianity among the idolaters of the east? Yes, it will probably be found when christianity comes to prevail in all western India (as will surely be the case at some future time,) that the instruction of the missionaries, given in the various methods which they employ, will have excited many individuals to inquire into the nature of religion, and to seek for a better foundation of their hopes than idolatry and superstition can furnish. These means will produce their appropriate effects. The time will come when the world shall be converted unto Christ. Though times of darkness and discouragement should come, and the event long be delayed, yet it will eventually be discovered that the testimony of God is not declared in vain, that christians have not furnished treasures, and missionaries spent their strength for nought. In the words of the society's report, "On the command of Christ, the example of the apostles, and the numerous promises of a day of glory to the world, both the missionaries and their friends may securely rest, so long as they cheerfully and faithfully discharge their respective duties." W.

(To be Continued.)

OBITUARY

OF REV. MOSES PARTRIDGE.

Died at Plymouth, Monument Ponds, September, 1824, Rev. Moses Partridge. He was the youngest son of Mr. Job Partridge of Bellingham, Mass. a man of unblemished morals and exemplary piety, who died September 11, 1823. The subject of this memoir was graduated at Brown University in 1814. Soon after his Collegiate course was completed, he entered upon the study of Divinity, which he pursued with some interruptions occasioned by feeble health, until the summer of 1816, when he was approbated as a preacher of the gospel. He now entered upon the work on which his heart had been set for years, and which had been his object in acquiring a classical education. In this work, he always appeared to delight. Although he had no flattering prospects of gain and no hope of acquiring that applause of the world, after which too many aspire; yet he pursued his work with peculiar diligence and with great apparent satisfaction. He was willing to labour in any place, and under any circumstances, in which there was the least prospect of winning souls to Christ, or of quickening and comforting saints. Wherever he

went, he seemed to have a testimony in every man's conscience that he feared God, and sought the promotion of his glory in the salvation of men. He was much of his time for several years, employed as a missionary among destitute and feeble churches, many of whom now remember and acknowledge the zeal and fidelity with which he preached and laboured among them. There is, it is believed, a number in different parts of the commonwealth, where he occasionally preached, who now acknowledge him as the means in God's hands of their awakening, conviction, and conversion. His talents were of the solid, rather than the brilliant kind. His sermons did not appear in all that elegance of style with which those of some other ministers are decorated, but they had properties far more valuable; they were sound in doctrine, and full of thought. His delivery, although not the most engaging, was always solemn and impressive.

After labouring for years in various waste-places in Zion, he was invited by the second Congregational Church and Society in Plymouth, to become their pastor and teacher. In this invitation, there was a great degree of union and cordiality. A promising field of usefulness now opening before him, he thought it his duty to enter it. He accord-

ingly accepted their invitation, and was, on the 21st of April last, solemnly consecrated to the work of the ministry among them. Those who were present on that interesting occasion, can never forget how visible was the fact, that God had turned their hearts to him, and his heart to them, and how hopeful was the prospect that this little flock which had been for years peculiarly afflicted and discouraged, might now see good in proportion to the days in which they had seen evil. But mysterious are the providences of God, and uncertain are all the hopes of men. Mr. Partridge laboured among his people but a little more than four months before he was attacked with a fever which, although it did not at first appear alarming, in a few weeks terminated his life. He has left an afflicted people "as sheep without a shepherd," and a numerous circle of friends, among whom is an amiable wife to whom he had been married but six weeks only, to mourn his loss: Accustomed to view the design and hand of God in all his providences, Mr. Partridge saw and acknowledged them in his sickness. He bore his sufferings with christian patience, and appeared uniformly resigned as to their final issue, "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace."

MESSRS. EDITORS,

There are many persons within the circle of my acquaintance, who hope, they are pious, but still neglect to make a public profession of religion from fear, that they have not the necessary qualifications for church-membership.

If you or some of your correspondents will state, what these qualifications are, and some of the evidences by which we may know whether we possess them, you will confer a favor upon an interested subscriber. C.

COLLEGE RECORD.

New Jersey College.—The annual commencement of this Institution, took place at Princeton, on Wednesday, the 20th Sept. *Forty-seven* young gentlemen received the degree of A. B. and *thirteen* Alumni of the College, that of A. M. The honorary degree of Doctor of Laws was conferred on the Hon. Jonas Platt, Esq. of the state of New-York.

Georgia University.—At the commencement held on the 4th of August, 19 young men received the degree of A. B. and 10 that of A. M. The degree of D. D. was conferred on the Rev. William H. Barr, of Abbeville, S. C. and that of LL. D. on the Hon. William H. Crawford, secretary of the treasury.

Washington College, Pa.—The annual commencement of this College took place on the 30th Sept. The degree of A. B. was conferred upon eight young gentlemen, and the honorary degree of D. D. on the Rev. John Black, of Pittsburgh.

Cincinnati College.—At the annual commencement of this Institution on the 30th Sept. three young

men were admitted to the degree of A. B. and three to that of A. M.

Hampden Sidney College, Va.—The commencement was held on the 23d of Sept. The degree of A. B. was conferred on 7 young gentlemen and that of A. M. on 9 alumni of the college.

ORDINATION.

Ordained, at Foxborough, Mass. on the 17th ultimo, REV. WILLARD PIERCE. The introductory prayer by the Rev. Mr. Briggs, of Mansfield; the Sermon by the Rev. Mr. Holmes, of New-Bedford; the Consecrating prayer, by the Rev. Mr. Cobb, of Rochester; the Charge by the Rev. Mr. Williams, of Attleborough; the Right Hand of Fellowship, by the Rev. Mr. Thatcher, of the North Parish in Wrentham; the Concluding prayer, by the Rev. Mr. Hitchcock, of Randolph.

On Wednesday, Nov. 3, Rev. FREDERICK FREEMAN was installed over the Third Congregational Church in Plymouth. Introductory prayer by Rev. William Eaton of Middleboro; sermon by Rev. Justin Edwards of Andover; Installing prayer by Rev. Luther Wright of Carver; Charge by Rev. Oliver Cobb of Rochester; Right-hand of Fellowship by Rev. David L. Hunn of Sandwich; Charge to the Church and Society by Rev. Samuel Greene of Boston; and the Concluding prayer by Rev. Sylvester Holmes of New-Bedford.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

We assure "A Friend to revivals," that peculiar reasons operated to prevent our noticing his valuable communication in the usual manner and at the proper time.

P. has been received and will be attended to.

ADDRESS

Of the Conductors of the Christian Magazine to their Readers and Patrons.

The conductors of the Christian Magazine have now brought the first volume to a close. The general design of the work has been stated in the Prospectus.-- How far they have succeeded in carrying it into effect must be left to the judgment of the candid.-- Those who are acquainted with the details and arrangements necessary in order to get such a work into fair operation, will know what allowance to make in favor of the conductors in the commencement of the publication. To those who have had any experience, the difficulties of the undertaking will readily be suggested. Type and paper, the entire manual execution, were considered as articles that demanded early attention. We trust that these are now satisfactory to our subscribers and justify that attention and respectability which we wish to claim for the work. Many and discordant objections were anticipated. We were not so preposterous as to expect that the result of our labours would meet with equal approbation from readers of diversity of tastes, views and feelings. All the variety demanded in respect to style and subjects and the methods and manner of treating them was foreseen and has been consulted to

the extent of our means and to the best of our judgment. The reflecting and candid, will not fail to perceive, that those who are fond of familiar narratives and short pieces and those, who wish for doctrinal subjects and elaborate discussions, could not both be equally gratified. Without disregarding different tastes and opinions, our aim has been to give general satisfaction to promote the best interests of those to whom we had access. We would be sparing of promises; but from the arrangements made and the encouragements given, we trust that the matter and manner of our work will rise in the estimation of our patrons and of the public.

It was not the design of the Christian Magazine to interfere with any other religious publication in the region in which it was expected mostly to circulate; but to fill the chasm they had left. In our apprehension, there was a deficiency which it was important to supply and which the exigencies of the religious public seemed to demand. A spirit of scepticism and of covert infidelity was observable. Learned and subtle opposition to what we believe to be the truth, was exerting itself, with untired effort, in all those ways and forms which appeared most to promise success. The simple and obvious doctrines and duties of our holy religion were passing, imperceptibly, into oblivion, and even among those justly reputed orthodox. It is not un-

known to the more intelligent part of those to whom we speak, that religious intelligence was occupying the minds of serious readers to the exclusion of the substantial truths and leading precepts of the gospel. A taste was, thereby generating which was, likely to become too fastidious to relish the discussion and vindication of primary topics in theology. Thus, many of the great truths and duties of christianity, were in danger of losing their influence on the heart and life, not by positive disbelief and rejection; but, by an unintentional and gradual neglect. None can appreciate more highly, than we do, the intelligence communicated in the religious journals of the day. It has a happy effect on the minds of christians and of others and is indispensable in carrying into operation, the plans of benevolence which distinguish the period in which we live. We must, however, believe that the reading of the publications, particularly, those which clearly state and powerfully enforce the knowledge contained in the lively oracles of God is requisite to vital piety and the best interests of religion in our churches and societies. Whilst we learn what God is doing in the *world*, we should not forget what he has *said* in his *word*, nor be unmindful of the great principles and purposes of his moral government. The mind should not be so devoted to his operations, as to forget his truths which shed a radiance over them. There should be a

conjoint attention to both. Truths *revealed* should have the pre-eminence to facts that *occur*. On the proper exhibition of them, more dependence is to be placed for the prevention of error and the counteraction of its baneful influence, and for the promotion of religious knowledge and practical godliness. Revivals of religion and the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom in the world are the effects and illustrations of revealed truth, owned and blessed of God. The cause cannot fairly be deemed of less importance than the effects produced.

We found others whose views were similar to our own respecting the religious exigencies of the public. A periodical work, such as the Christian Magazine was designed to be, seemed to be demanded in the opinion of many whose judgment deserved respect. Others of the kind highly instructive and gratifying, had disappeared and there was nothing to supply their places. That numerous class of readers who were, for many years, pleased and profited by the Massachusetts Missionary Magazine, the Panoplist, the Connecticut Evangelical Magazine and the New-York Missionary Magazine, were left without any proper substitutes. The Christian Spectator, a work of great merit and of deserved reputation, is rather adapted to the clergy than the laity, to the academic, than to the less informed reader. The Utica Repository, an able and ju-

ditions publication, was too remote for the convenience of subscribers in this region and to justify a belief that it could obtain a general circulation in the district of our particular concern and regard.— Besides, there are local errors, views and feelings which distant editors could not be expected to meet.

In the observations now made, which it is believed, will be allowed to be just, our readers and the public will perceive the occasion and some of the reasons for commencing the work before them.— These still exist and call for its continuance.

We have, indeed, fallen on times of no ordinary character and which demand no ordinary exertions on the part of those who would maintain and promote the doctrines and spirit of the gospel. The most careless observer cannot have failed to notice the varied theology of the present period, nor the lax morality produced by its influence. The foundations of many generations are assailed and with weapons too formidable and wielded, in a manner too dexterous not to excite vigilance and activity. Old and long exploded errors appear under new modifications, and opinions, as novel in character, as pernicious in their effects are obtruded upon our notice.— The plain Bible christian is perplexed and knows not what to think; the wicked triumph and the uncircumcised rejoice. The cry of tradition, bigotry and super-

stition frightens hundreds out of their belief, and leaves them trembling on the ruins of their faith amidst universal doubt. When in this situation, they are prepared, as it was intended, to take any other ground, than that on which they before stood. It is undeniable that men err in respect to duty and we may fairly expect they do in respect to truth, and most when the duties and institutions of religion are most neglected. We are far from being persuaded, that the change observable in religious opinions, is to be attributed to the increase of knowledge, or to improvement in virtue. Other probable and obvious causes might be assigned. We are not able to deny that much is not to be ascribed to the interests and passions of men. Open infidelity has had its day and done its work of mischief and has passed into deserved contempt. The great question now, ostensibly, is, not whether there be a revealed religion, but what that religion is, and the great aim with numbers seems to be to bring the truths and spirit of the scriptures to what men choose to believe and practice.

Under the reign of infidelity, it was not the bible, considered as a revelation, that enkindled the spirit of opposition, but its holy precepts and its restraining motives. If we mistake not, much of the same disposition is observable in the present day. In many of the religious opinions now ad-

vanced and in the state of moral feeling which exists, we see much reason for alarm, not for the ultimate results of truth, but for the welfare of the present, if not for the succeeding generation. To us it appears, that the moral, social and religious effects cannot be very dissimilar, whether it is believed, that there is no God to punish, or none that will ; and considering human depravity, whether punishment be remedial and temporary or whether none will be inflicted. Upon either supposition, the impenitent will go on still in their trespasses, and all the present effects of a disregard to a future retribution will be realized and immortal souls will venture on to everlasting death. An indifference to the concerns of a future state, will be productive of neglect of religion and subvert the best interests of the social state.

Notwithstanding all the scepticism and different and opposite sentiments that abound, the truth is *somewhere* and will, at last, appear, and we fear to the disappointment and confusion of many. While others are, with industry and perseverance rarely equalled, disseminating and urging their opinions, we claim and would use the right of stating our belief and of showing the reasons upon which it is founded. In doing this, we hope to be of service to those who will read and judge with unbiased feelings. We place more confidence in a direct, fair and full

exhibition of divine truth, in order to prevent and remove error and to promote the spiritual good of our fellow men than in any other means. It is scriptural to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, and to take the way we propose. By these observations, it is not to be understood, that we decline controversy and shall not directly expose false sentiments and wrong practices, as occasion shall require, but that we prefer and shall mainly pursue the more elevated course of exhibiting truth and duty in the best lights in which we are able to present them. Believing that in God's light, light is most likely to be seen, we shall endeavour to remove obscurities thrown over it and so cause it to shine in its own native radiance. We hope, thereby, to commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God, to whom we devote our labors and to whose blessing, commend our work. With the present month, another year will close with us and with our readers. The close connection between them and ourselves and the intercourse we have had with them should dispose to mutual reflection. We have brought before them some of the most important truths and the most interesting concerns and we hope, with some degree of fidelity. They will consider, how they have read and profited and what account they shall be able to give of the use of the instruction which we have

been instrumental in imparting.— In the light, which revelation sheds on the future destinies of men, it appears to us a great privilege to have access to their minds and confer with them respecting their character and condition, and their hopes and prospects as accountable beings to God. Of the value of this privilege, we have not been wholly unmindful, nor of the responsibility under which it has laid us. On the other hand, it is to be hoped, that our readers consider it a privilege to have the means and facilities of knowing him with whom they have to do and their own character and state, and of being often reminded of their dangers and duties. These mutual privileges will soon terminate, and the use and abuse of them and of all oth-

ers, will be registered for the final judgment. The year which is drawing to a close, has been the last to thousands of human beings to whom life was dear and the day and means of grace important. None of us are unaffected by its passage. We are brought nearer to the grave and to our final and eternal state. It becomes us seriously to pause and to consider how it has been spent, and what we have done in relation to the cause of Christ, and the interests of our souls. Including our readers and patrons with ourselves, and in view of the rapid flight of time, we would offer our prayer to God in the language of the Psalmist:—
“So teach us to number our days,
that we may apply our hearts to wisdom.”

INDEX.

An aged Sinner, Advice of	350	Long Mrs. Obituary Notice of	352
Anecdotes	63, 127, 319	Looking Glass, Ladies'	72
Bible, easy to be understood	193	Letter from a Member of a Church	
Bible	296	to the Pastor	153
Constant advancement in religion,		Labour-saving Inventions	245
the duty of Christians	44	Liberty and Necessity	277
Contrast	88	Letter from a Clergyman to his	
Conversion of Miss X. Narrative of	92	Friend	316
Conversion of Miss A.	123	Man a free, moral, and accountable	
Correspondents	160, 224, 378	Agent	161
Confidence in God, Peaceful Ef-		Merciful Purpose of God	203
fects of	258	Missions, Success of 213, 249, 280,	
College Record	378	341 and 378	
Controversy between God and Sin-		Memoirs of Mrs. H.	284
ners	296	Mutual Comfort of Christians	321
Christians' Growth in Grace. Di-		Naaman, Remarks on the History of	329
vine Truth the means of	15	Ordinations 64, 128, 160, 192, 256,	
Dives and Lazarus	90	288, 378	
Divine Decrees, the fundamental		Pastoral Address	217
Doctrine of the Gospel	97	Partridge Rev. M. obituary of	376
Divinity and Humanity of Jesus		Perditus, Conviction of	252
Christ	150	Question	155
Doctrines of Divine Revelation har-		Religious Experience of Mrs. P.	27
monize with Events in Divine		Of President Edwards	56
Providence	289	Relation of	58
Disinterested Love, the Essence of		Religious Intelligenece 30, 156, 188, 220	
true Religion	308	Distress and Relief	187
Enmity towards Jesus Christ, un-		Instruction of Children	231
reasonableness of	79	Request to editors	378
Everlasting Gospel	1	Revival of Religion in Carver	214
Excuses, Habit of making	127	Sermons 15, 44, 115, 139, 193, 231,	
Faith, Prayer for the Increase of	115	258, 321, 356	
Fasting explained	111	Sermon, review of	364
False Teachers, Condemnation of	184	Sickness, Pleasures of	95
	210, 242	Saints delight to know what the	
Fragment	313	Bible contains	33
Godliness	353	Sinners cannot be saved without	
Gilbee Dr. Dying testimony of	94	Repentance	24
Gospel, its own Witness to those		Sinners have no right to complain	
who embrace it	53	of God	129
Explanation of	54	Schemes of Sermons	155, 219
Embracing of	84	Self-denial of the Lord Jesus Christ	1*6
The true way of Salvation	85	Strange Thing	266
The only way of Salvation	133	Sinners may be saved if they will	336
Reflections	136	Subscribers	352
Good Style	60	Troubles and Comforts of Christians	38
God and Sinners, Controversy be-		True Religion, Influence of	65
tween	296	Union of Christians in Heaven	9
Hoopoo's Letter	348	Value of the Soul	107
Inconsistent Professors, God dis-		Voltaire, Death of	345
pleased with	139	Will, Nature of	147
Index	384	Freedom of	170
Instruction Parents should give to		Work of Redemption, Angels pleas-	
their Children	333	ed with	226
Jewish Settlement, Plan of	62		
Judas Iscariot, Sin of, in betraying			
his Lord	203		



THE CHRISTIAN MAGAZINE.

BY MEMBERS OF MENDON ASSOCIATION.

VOL. I.

DECEMBER, 1824.

No. 12.

CONTENTS.

ORIGINAL COMMUNICATIONS.		Obituary of the Rev. Moses Par-	
	PAGE.	ridge,	376
Godliness,	353	Request to Editors	378
Sermon, No. IX. The happy influ-		College Record	ib.
ence of holy fear,	356	Ordinations, &c.	ib.
Review,	364	Index,	384
Success of Missions, No. V.	373		

CONDITIONS.

1. The CHRISTIAN MAGAZINE shall contain 32 octavo pages, be executed as respects the type and paper in the style of the Christian Spectator, and afforded to subscribers at \$1 50 a volume, payable in advance; or \$2 paid at the end of six months.

2. Those who become responsible for five copies shall receive the sixth gratis.

3. No subscriptions are to be taken for less than a year; and if notice of discontinuance is not given before the issuing of the last number, subscribers will be considered as desiring it the succeeding year.

4. It shall be published in Providence, R. I. commencing with January.

N. B. All communications to this work are to be sent, *Post Paid*, to the Office of BARNUM FIELD, by whom it is to be printed.

*. Subscribers are requested to give directions to the Printer, where they will have their numbers deposited.

PROVIDENCE, R. I.

PRINTED FOR THE PROPRIETORS BY BARNUM FIELD.

1824.

*Subscriptions and Payments for the Christian Magazine
received by the following gentlemen :*

Boston, Mass. John Galliver ; Franklin, Rev. Nathaniel Emmons D. D. Wrentham Rev. Elisha Fisk, Rev. Moses Thacher ; Medway, Rev. Jacob Ide ; Attleborough, Rev. John Ferguson, Mr. Samuel Tyler ; Hopkinton, Rev. Nathaniel Howe ; Newburyport, Mr. Charles Whipple ; Salem, Mr. Cornelius Davis ; Andover, Mr. Samuel Kingsbury ; Byefield, Rev. Elijah Parish, D. D. Taunton, Rev. Alvan Cobb ; New-Bedford, Deacon Barker ; Middleborough, Capt. Nathaniel Eddy ; Abington, Rev. Samuel M. Colburn, Rev. Daniel Thomas, Rev. Samuel Spring ; Braintree, Rev. Jonas Perkins ; Weymouth, Rev. William Tyler ; Randolph, Rev. David Brigham ; Wareham, Rev. Mr. Hemenway ; Sandwich, Rev. David L. Hunn ; Falmouth, Rev. Silas Shores ; Plympton, Rev. Elijeh Dexter ; Carver, Rev. Luther Wright ; Uxbridge, Rev. Samuel Judson ; Northbridge, Rev. John Crane, D. D. Ward, Rev. Enoch Pond ; Harvard, Rev. George Fisher ; Foxborough, M. Everett, Esq. Plymouth, Mr. John Harlow ; Ashby, Rev. M. Putnam ; Fitchburgh, Rev. Mr. Putnam ; Waltham, Rev. Sewall Harding ; Douglas, Rev. David Holman ; Upton, Dea. Daniel Fisk ; Sutton, Doct. David March ; Seekonk, Dea. Elihu Carpenter ; Ashford, Conn. Rev. Reuben Torrey ; New-York City, N. Y. Mr. Sabin Lethbridge ; Providence, R. I. Mr. Barnum Field, Printer ; Newport, Rev. Samuel Austin, D. D. Little Compton, Rev. Emerson Paine ; East-Greenwich, John Brown, Esq. Troy, Mass. Rev. Augustus B. Reed ; T. H. Miller, Portsmouth, N. H.

Those subscribers to the Magazine who wish to have their volumes bound, can have them done at this Office, at a discount from the usual prices.

GTU Library



3 2400 00269 5793

v.1
1824

CBPaC

The Christian Magazine

v.1
1824

